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NUGÆ CRITICÆ

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NUGÆ CRITICÆ

OCCASIONAL PAPERS WRITTEN AT THE SEASIDE BY SHIRLEY.



Now nature is not at variance with art, nor art with nature; they being both servants of His providence. Nature hath made one world, and art another. In brief, all things are artificial; for nature is the art of God.

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TO

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

SIR EDWARD BULWER LYTTON, BART.

THIS VOLUME

IS CORDIALLY INSCRIBED.

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NUGÆ CRITICÆ

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AT THE SEASIDE.

——— neighboured close Oceanus, and Tethys, in whose lap Sobbed Clymene among her tangled hair.

HYPERION.

OMER sometimes takes us away from the camp; and the frequent oblique allusions to rural life in the *Iliad* are very pleasant. It is most refreshing to quit the dusty tents of the Greeks for the breakers through which Thetis dives with her nymphs; or the quiet nooks upon distant Ida, where husbandmen tend their vines, and look down year after year, with a patient wonder, upon the belated city of the plain. And the pastoral allusions of the *Iliad* affect us perhaps more directly—because they are unexpected and incidental—subordinate to the main and central purpose of the epic—like the sudden pathos

most men how necessary the occasional presence of the sea and the stars, the mountain and the forest, is to the health of our intellectual life; and so the light played through the leaves of his columns, the sky arched his temples, and the

of Thackeray. The Greek understood better than

flying clouds drifted across the theatre. Homer was a true Greek, and Homer did likewise.

And such a culture is to the northmen—however neglected it may be by those who in their legislation take no count of the idiosyncrasies of nations—perhaps even more necessary than to the For the Greeks in all things manifested an exquisite moderation. Field sports were not neglected among them, but they followed them with the chaste and simple decorum which characterized all their pursuits. The passionate appetite of the Goth for hunting and hawking, and the other amusements of the chase, was a very different feeling. Its greater eagerness and impetuosity may probably be ascribed in some degree to the severity of a northern climate, which requires for thorough enjoyment more strenuous exertion than is possible under the summer-haunted sky of the Ægean. A brief, breathless chase in the short daylight, and then the barbarian returned to his family—a word to him of infinite import, and by the blazing logs defied the cold and the darkness. He yielded himself up for the time more entirely "The mysteries of woods and to the fascination. rivers" appealed to his imagination as powerfully as the mysteries of his sombre superstition, with which indeed they were intimately allied. love of nature, which to the Greeks was a moderate and subordinate passion, is, from his constitution, a more predominant and engrossing instinct with the Saxon, and his rulers in consequence, wanting the politic solicitude of the Athenian, take every opportunity to shut it out from him as entirely as

possible. A most mischievous mistake. We may depend upon it, that no culture is or can be perfectly wholesome which is not partly acquired in the open air. Give the citizen such opportunities, and he will return to his work with a stronger heart and a clearer brain; but if, through the routine of toil, you admit no dash of sunshine, no sweep of the sea-breeze, no glimpse of the hills, then your broad-shouldered Saxon will become a weak, crazy, and conceited creature, a correspondent of the Vegetarian Association, and an Associate of the Peace Society.

It is quite true, my dear Lancelot, that we have seen in our time a very pretty variety of sport. A man who has shot teal on the Venetian lagoons, and quail on the sea-shore by classic Capua, and woodcock in winter among the covers on the skirts of Æta, may thank his stars. But it is also undeniable that he who has long roamed over the world with a hungry heart, and, with the wise Ulysses,

Touched the happy isles, And seen the great Achilles, whom we knew,

cannot readily accept the stale restraints of an artificial society. Society, indeed, is very well, in a right way. Ninette's charming suppers, solutis Gratiæ zonis, and Vivian's short whist and still champagne, are epochs upon which we may always look back with affectionate regret; but one, latterly, tires of the orthodox proprieties which cannot be disregarded without angry recrimination and loud invective. Is it not better, then, to leave it alone? Of course, the Horatian can easily prove to you,

with his charming common-places, and in his proverbially good-natured way, the utter futility of such a proceeding. Patriæ quis exsul se quoque fugit? The disease is upon you, and you carry it with you as you go: et post equitem sedet atra Cura. And then he will blandly suggest his golden mean auream mediocritatem; which consists mainly, as it appears, in a decorous belief in the divinity of Bacchus. Dissipat Evius curas edaces. For my own part, I am quite sure that every man has a much better chance of passing through life profitably and comfortably, who, by the blessing of Providence, can quit a city for a country life; as a nation which depopulates its rural districts to overpopulate its commercial, will some day learn to its cost. There are duties, no doubt, which chain a man to the crowd; and if he puts his hand to his work bravely and honestly, he will not want his reward; but as mine and yours, Lancelot, lie in quite a different direction, shall we not say with Falstaff, "Hal, I prithee, trouble me no more with vanity?"

The Capital is a pleasant city, especially during this autumnal season, when it is shunned by the natives as though it harboured the plague. And, for any direct proof to the contrary, the plague may have swept it—which assuredly for many days the stricken scavengers have not. The city is a desert, a Sahara. These pleasant gardens, that lie so lovingly within the rude embrace of the rocks, are as empty as the benches of the Opposition. The royal flag droops languidly against the staff, and a bugle call comes down through the sultry air like an intimation from the next world.

The brushwood, creeping up the face of the steep ascent with a show of graceful timidity, has already sickened under the fierce August heat, and the fresh and delicate flush of its joyous spring-time is even now departing. She, too, has gone—the fair and gracious presence that haunts your dreams—can you ever forget those glorious eyes that looked into your inmost soul, and the proudlywreathed and rounded lip that might strike you with its queenly disdain, were it not for the sweet womanly pity that will rather pardon your presumption, and pray that you be forgiven?—nay, even that noblest of women—"the greatest of voluntary martyrs, a mother with a daughter to marry" -has fled from the desolate arena. Not a nurserymaid is stirring. Two aged chairmen who are dozing calmly at the corner of Castle Street, have no doubt been "hired to stand and represent population." Across the hills of Perthshire, in imagination at least, we can see the blue smoke rising from many a bothie, where the good sportsman prepares to grasp his breech-loader, and a pleasant noise of guns and dogs comes cheerily upon us with the wind. The Bedouin impulse cannot be restrained. One casts away that intense and oppressive respectability which is characteristic of the metropolitan mind in its well-regulated Princes Street ceases to be a prison-A gallop over Arthur's Seat does not necessarily imply, among your professional brethren, that the descent to Avernus is rapid. The fair, false, violet-haired Evadne,-

Perfida, sed quamvis perfida, cara tamen,-

Dunoon; and, inspired by the association, we take the afternoon train for the Chain Pier, revel among the salt water, and explore "the moist ways of the sea," as Chapman translates his Homer. While away to the south'ard, backed by green hills and bronzed with golden mist, the historic city clings to its rocky ridge.

When sunset bathes thee in his gold,
In wreaths of bronze thy sides are rolled,
Thy smoke is dusky fire;
And from the glory round thee poured,
A sunbeam like an angel's sword
Shivers upon a spire.

But Here, my dear Lancelot, our emancipation is still more complete. That badge of servitude, the white tie, is unloosed. Your razor grows rusty. There are no "exhibitions." My lady is never "at home." We are never stifled in ball-rooms. We have no municipal representatives—even Lord John has not thought of sending us a constitution yet. You know the look of the country. Barren moorlands and gray sterile beaches, with flinty sands; troops of forlorn pines along the sky-line, where the red-deer keeps his ward; rents of blue sea, sprinkled with green desolate islands; a "Godforgotten land," as Sydney Smith might say. Yet to the student, the lover of nature, and the naturalist, the place has its own bleak charm and sullen Let me try, Lancelot, to make this plain to you; to shew you the kind of life that is led on one of the wildest sea-boards beaten by the Arctic Sea.

Even in the temperate zone, a man must have some kind of Christian shelter during the winter months, a snuggery where he can comfortably philosophize, collect his specimens, and arrange his notes. How shall I describe to you the rambling old-fashioned place where we have set up our household gods?

It was once a defensive position of some consequence, and I daresay did duty in the days of the sea-kings; but the moat is now overgrown with sweet briar and the white Scotch rose, and the old walls are gaily sprinkled with jessamine, and the culverin no longer looks out watchfully over the hostile main. If the Russians or John Bright-which heaven forbid-should make a descent upon us, the degenerate descendants of the Scotch thane could encounter the enemy with no heavier metal than a double-barrelled duck gun. The state apartments are upon the ground floor, and connected with each other; but there is a queer little corner in one of the old turrets to which I climb sometimes of a winter afternoon, and, through the fragrant latakia, watch the snowclouds drifting across the sea, or the battling of the waves upon the beach. The walls of the larger rooms are panelled with oak, and the cornice is of the same material, and carved curiously into thickets of lilies and vine leaves, out of which peer, with malicious intelligence on the spectator, the quaint physiognomies of Faun and Satyr. old entrance-hall—a sombre apartment, conceived in a large and gloomy spirit—lies, instead of a court-yard, in the midway of the mansion, and



AT THE SEASIDE.

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throws off branches on either side, which like those of our great railway companies, for the most part lead ultimately to nowhere in particular. during the snowy Christmas nights, and when the light of the blazing logs shines keenly on the red faces of the men, and the gay dresses of the children, old neighbours meet together-for prelacy with its lusty enjoyment of life has never been, and is not yet, rooted out in these parts -- and drink to the good old times, when there were no poor rates and no prison boards, no high farming, and no financial reform, no Manchester school of peace, and no Peelite school of politics. the ample hearth is an oaken door, covered with green baize and gilt tacks, which, revolving silently on its hinges—as well-ordered doors ought admits the favoured visitor to a large and cheerful room, whose sashed windows open upon a terraced flower-garden, and look out over the blue sea. This forms the sanctum, the inner temple, into which no profane foot of woman-kind is permitted to enter, and to do fitting justice to whose motley contents would require the harlequin genius of Hudibras.

There is lava from Vesuvius and quartz from San Francisco; silver trinkets from Genoa, and glass beads from Venice; skins of seals, and bears, and Bengal tigers; dried sea-weeds and stuffed sea-fish; eggs of divers from Labrador, and of parrots from the Bahamas; shells gathered in the lagoons, and pearls fished out of the Scamander. Then, upon the tables, or the shelves which occupy its difficult and profound recesses, books of every description are to be found. Those wonderful

dramas, into which a man who lived the best of his days in the tavern and the theatre, has condensed all the wisdom and experience of this mortal life; those quaint fragments through which our forefathers told us, with devout and loyal simplicity, of the heroic life which they tried at least to lead; those generous idyls of the laureate, who, since Shakspeare, is the most complete man and the most catholic poet that our Old England has produced! Ah! those sweet idyls, wherein is the strength of man, the tenderness of woman, the brightness and bloom of childhood! Then there is a batch of the novelists of the last century—the utterly pitiless because utterly selfish Sterne, whose forced tears are yet so dewy and natural that we cannot but weep with him, even while both of us are conscious of the exquisite artifice; Fielding, with his intense human truthfulness, and wise careless common sense, and that direct infallible insight which is never at fault, either upon philosophy or life; and of course where Fielding is, Thackeray cannot well be absent. There is no lack, either, of volumes more strictly professional. Aristotle and Pliny present us with their notions of the antique cosmos; there are queer mediæval worthies, whose faces are blackened with the dust of the dark ages and the smoke of their crucibles: Sir Thomas Browne enlarges on the Norfolk marshes and the great bustards of the Downs, whose aon, in England, at least has expired; from the diocese of Bergen in Norway, "where the north light takes its rise," comes old Pontoppidan, credulous of many things, as mermen, and swallows sound asleep all the winter within the

mere, and the great sea-snake, whereof the portrait given by the worthy bishop bears a curious resemblance to that by Richard Doyle in the immortal pages of Punch* but who is yet of a cautious, not to say sceptical, disposition, and will not believe in ducks "growing on trees," and "a bottomless abyss in the Moskoestrom, penetrating quite through the globe," and many other matters currently credited in that latitude. German books of prints there are also, where birds, and beasts, and little Dutch children, and other productions of natural history, are treated with charming quaintness and shrewd simplicity: the whole being steadied by the precise and scientific observations of our own time, Montagu, and Bewick, and Audubon, and Yarrell, and MacGillivray, and St. John, and, last not least, Waterton, of pleasant and pugnacious memory, who holds to Charles the Martyr, and right divine, and the Pretender, and "the Milk-white Hind, immortal and unchanged," and many other little heresies, for which, however, there is no tolerance in an age which talks of toleration.

Some ignorant people suppose that the lite-

* So far as personal acquaintance with the monster, the good bishop was much in the same condition with Peter Dass, whose verses he quotes:

The great sea-snake's the subject of my song,
For though my eyes have never yet beheld him,
Nor ever shall desire the hideous sight,
Yet many accounts of men of truth unstained,
Whose ev'ry word I firmly do believe,
Show it to be a very frightful monster.

Nat. Hist. of Norway, vol. ii.

rature of ornithology is not very extensive; whereas every one ought to know that it is the poets, and not the men of science, who have given us the most felicitous description of the feathered race; and that there is hardly a poet who deserves the name who has not been a practical naturalist. Homer, Jeremiah, Virgil, Shakspeare, Milton, Burns, Keats! And it is the best sign of some of the younger men, that they have thought fit to follow in this respect the example of our great living poet: who, for his ornithological culture, has been chiefly indebted, I fancy, to "the purple woods of Sussex," haunted by the rook and the merlin, and the great western estuaries, along whose yellow sands the white sea-gulls

Bear up from where the bright Atlantic gleams, Swooping to landward.

Among these gentlemen, Mr. Longfellow* shews—especially in *Hiawatha*—the most per-

* How rich and vigorous is the humour of the passage which describes the capture of "Kahgagee, the King of Ravens:"—

Only Kahgagee the leader,
Kahgagee the King of Ravens,
He alone was spared among them
As a hostage for his people.
With his prisoner-string he bound him,
Led him captive to his wigwam,
Tied him fast with chords of elm-bark
To the ridge-pole of his wigwam.
'Kahgagee, my raven,' said he,
'You, the leader of the robbers,
You, the plotter of this mischief,
The contriver of this outrage,

I will keep you, I will hold you As a hostage for your people— As a pledge of good behaviour!'



AT THE SEASIDE.

fect appreciation of the bird character; and it would have been curious indeed had the American poet been able to escape the fascination which the strange cries and fantastic forms of the American birds communicate to the still forest-life. Take the Heron,—

So they wrestled there together
In the glory of the sunset,
Till the darkness fell around them;
And the heron, the Shuh-shuh-gah,
From her haunts among the fen-lands,
Gave a cry of lamentation,
Gave a cry of pain and famine.

Or the Wild Goose:

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To a lake with many islands,
Where among the water-lilies
Pishnekuh, the brant, were sailing;
Through the tufts of iushes floating,
Steering through the reedy islands.
Now their broad black beaks they lifted;
Now they plunged beneath the water;
Now they darkened in the shadow;
Now they brightened in the sunshine.

Or the Eagle:

And the noble Hiawatha
Sang his war-song wild and woful,
And above him the war-eagle,
The keneu, the great war-eagle,
Master of all fowls with feathers,
Screamed and hurtled through the heavens.

And he left him, grim and sulky, Sitting in the morning sunshine, On the summst of the wigwam, Croaking fiercely his displeasure, Flapping his great sable pinions, Vainly struggling for his freedom, Vainly calling on his people!

Or the Sea-gull:

And she waited till the sunset,
Till the pallid moon, the night-sun,
Rose above the tranquil water;
Till Kayoshk, the sated sea-gulls,
From their banquet rose with clamour,
And across the fiery sunset
Winged their way to far-off islands,—
To their nests among the rushes.

Or the Flamingo:

Back retreated Mudjekeewis
To the portals of the sunset—
To the earth's remotest border,
Where into the empty spaces,
Sinks the sun as a flamingo,
Drops into his nest at nightfall,
In the melancholy marshes.

No ornithology, however, can be more correct than that contained in Homeric writ, which may also be remarked of the geographical science as confirmed by Mr. Kinglake in the reign of her most gracious Majesty Victoria, and of the legal lore as attested by Tribonian, in that of the most sacred Emperor Justinian! Over the arid plains of Africa the cranes "stretch their long necks, and clap their rustling wings," as they fly with noise and order "to that land, beyond the mountains of Æthiopia, over which, though a waste solitude in the day, and a more waste silence, frequent fires shine by night, and camps, as it were, are seen widely spread, and cymbals and sounding pipes are heard more than human:"*—through the twilight we know by "its shrill cry and whistling pinions" the

^{*} This is the striking description of the land of the Pigmies given by the old geographer, Pomponius Mela, and quoted by Ritson, Fairy Tales, p. 15.

purple heron that erst bore the behest of Minerva: —the imperious falcon "hangs on the wing and swims along the sky" in just the same fashion as when it startled the clear-sighted old Greek—for Homer was not blind THEN—scrambling over the rocks that skirt the Ægean, and measuring his sonorous verse to the resonant murmur of the sea! Homer's ornithology was the ornithology of Greece, a mountainous country of lavish woods and abundant water—a country notable for its delicious intermingling of sea and land; Shakspeare's is the ornithology of the South Coast and of the Midland Counties. One sees the difference at a It is the chough, the dab-chick, the glance. mallard, the wild goose, the sea-eagle, that he is best acquainted with—birds that might then be found upon every brook and rivulet in the south of England—that English sportsmen have always followed with peculiar zest, and which were no doubt plentiful and strictly preserved among the ponds in the great chase at Charlecote.

> I think he'll be to Rome As is the *osprey* to the fish, who takes it By sovereignty of Nature.

I would not, though 't is my familiar sin With maids to seem the lapwing, and to Jest Tongue far from heart, play with all virgins so.

The crows and *choughs* that wing the midway air, Show scarce so gross as beetles.

When they him spy,
As wild geese that the creeping fowler's eye,
Or russet-pated choughs, many in sort,
Rising and cawing at the gun's report,
Sever themselves, and madly sweep the sky:
So at his sight away his fellows fly.

Shakspeare could never have written these lines had he not been a sportsman; and no one, except a naturalist who has watched the bird beside the reeds on the river bank, can thoroughly appreciate the exquisite comparison of the wary dab-chick to the shy and reluctant Adonis,—

Look how he can, she cannot choose but love;
And by her fair immortal hand she swears
From his soft bosom never to remove,
Till he take truce with her contending tears,
Which long have rained, making her cheeks all wet;
And one sweet kiss shall pay this countless debt.

Upon this promise did he raise his chin,
Like a dive-dapper peering through a wave,
Who, being looked on, ducks as quickly in;
So offers he to give what she did crave;
But when her lips were ready for his pay,
He winks, and turns his lips another way.

And who but a genuine naturalist would ever have been bold enough to compare the proud, dauntless, passionate Marc Antony,—to what?

Antony

Claps on his sea-wing, and like a doting mallard, Leaving the fight in height, flies after her.

How the fresh morning tones—one can hear the fluttering and twittering of the birds through it all!—in this description of the habitations haunted by the swallow, contrast with the dark and bloody colours of the midnight murder which immediately follows:

Duncan.—This castle hath a pleasant seat: the air Nimbly and sweetly recommends itself Unto our gentle senses.

Banquo.—This guest of Summer,
The temple-haunting martlet, does approve,
By his loved mansionry, that the heaven's breath



16 AT THE SEASIDE.

Smells wooingly here. No jutty, frieze, Buttress, nor coigne of vantage, but this bird Hath made his pendent bed and procreant cradle: Where they most breed and haunt, I have observed, The air is delicate.

But to quote all the descriptions of the poet-naturalist would fill a volume, and a very pleasant volume, let me say at the same time, it would be.

The more legitimate literature of ornithology, however, is not without interest—especially that older portion of it, when science yet leaned on superstition. What strange theories, for instance, the annual departure of the migratory birds gave rise to!

That the swallow lay all winter in the water, was regarded by Pontoppidan as an article of belief which it was heretical to question. "Everybody knows," he says, "that toward the winter, after they have chirped about a little, or, as we say, sang their swallow song, they fly in flocks together, and plunge themselves down in freshwater lakes, and commonly among reeds and bushes, whence, in the spring time, they come forth again, and take possession of their former dwell-This "incontestable truth" had shortly before been contested by George Edwards, who is accordingly attacked with much asperity by the clerical naturalist. I have fallen upon a curious little work on this subject, entitled, An Essay towards the probable Solution of the Question-Whence comes the Stork?—quite a curiosity in its way, being really an ornithological interpretation of a passage in Jeremiah,—"the stork in the heaven knoweth her appointed times; and the

turtle, and the crane, and the swallow the time of their coming," Though my copy, which you will find in that shelf, is unfortunately without date, I believe it, from internal evidence, to have been written some time during the reign of Charles I., probably about 1630. It is by no means a bad specimen of a century when Biblical criticism and subjective speculation were resorted to for an explanation of the facts of nature, in preference to the facts themselves. I do not know if you are acquainted, my dear Lancelot, with the social literature of that century; but if you are, you cannot have failed to notice how curiously the text of Scripture—especially of the Old Testament —is wrought and twisted into the language. Glance over the tracts in the Somers Collection, and you will scarcely find a speech or pamphlet which is not to a remarkable extent garnished with Biblical quotations. An ambitious statesman goes to the scaffold; a patriot draws the sword of the Lord and of Gideon; an unscrupulous lawyer defends the prerogative; a wit sends his mistress a copy of his profligate rhymes; and each severally exhibits the most familiar acquaintance with the words of the Hebrew Scripture. The fashion was of course at its height during the tyranny of the Commonwealth, but it survived, at least in the phraseology of the Whigs and Dissenters-Shaftesbury seldom addressed his peers without lugging in a lugubrious denunciation from the Pentateuch —till a much later period. The author of the inquiry into the conduct of the stork is very strong in this line, and if Biblical criticism could have explained the facts of nature, his speculations would perhaps have been verified ere now.

The popular belief, which we have given in Pontoppidan's words, he summarily dismisses. Depend upon it, he argues with considerable shrewdness, the swallow would prefer warmer quarters during winter than the clay clumps at the bottom of rivers. Besides, if they really did sleep, would they not be more dull and drooping towards bed-time? But this is not the case; on the contrary "their cheerfulness at that time seems to intimate that they have some noble work in hand, and some great design to set presently upon." Moreover, as the words of the Vulgate are tempus itineris, the journey they make must be to some distance, which could hardly be averred if they only went to the bottom of the next pond. From this argument it might really seem as if he were nearing the scientific fact of migration. no means. He cannot rest satisfied with so unphilosophical a compromise. The fact is much too simple and obvious for his acceptance. say, therefore," he goes on, "that divers of these fowls which make such changes and observe their seasons, do pass and repass between this and the They come down directly upon us when moon. our land is presented fair for them, as they view it above in the atmosphere." And this conclusion. arrived at by the à priori method, will be most satisfactorily demonstrated if we will only consider the following facts.—Be it noted, by the way, how wonderfully flexible and pliant facts became in the seventeenth century, and how politely

desirous they seem to have been to accommodate themselves to the ingenious speculations of the philosophers, so that the facts are just about as reliable as the speculations.—In the first place, no one has ever seen these birds out of their season on the earth, and if they are not on the earth, where, if not in the moon, can they be? Again, their arrival with us is so sudden and simultaneous, that they must drop down all in a body from some station overhead: what station so eligible as the moon? Moreover, their flesh is of quite a different quality when they arrive from what it is later in the season; the first cocks especially are without blood;

For they on honey-dew have fed, And drank the milk of Paradise;

or, in other words, have been used to a different diet during their sojourn among the marshes overhead. And finally, does not Jeremiah expressly use in the text the words—'in the heaven?'—words which must obviously mean that the stork migrates to the moon, which, as we all know, is "in the heaven," while our earth is in the ——? The airy voyagers of course require some three or four months to accomplish the journey, and there are other insignificant little difficulties, which, however, are easily disposed of by the grave ingenuity of "It remains, therefore, the seventeenth century. that the stork does go unto, and remain in, some one of the celestial bodies, and that must be the moon."—Q.E.D.

We have seen that Edward's heresy raised the

choler of the excellent Bishop of Bergen; but even his scepticism was not very profound, and did not extend beyond the swallow. His work on Birds was written about the middle of last century (the first volume was published in 1743), at which time he says, "It is the opinion of most anxious and learned gentlemen, that they (the migratory birds) lie hid during the winter." He argues very soundly against the doctrine in the case of the swallow, but adopts it when applied to the migratory sea-birds.* "I think the most satisfactory conjecture for the manner of their hiding themselves, and being preserved during the long and cold winters of these climates, is that there are submarine caverns in the rocky shores of these islands, the mouths of which caverns, though they may be under water, so rising within as to afford a convenient dry harbour, fit to preserve these birds in a kind of torpid state during the

Britannia Baconica; or the natural rarities of England, Scotland, and Wales, etc., by T. Childrey, London, 1662.

[&]quot;during the winter, swallows are found sitting in old deep tin-works and holes of the sea-cliffs." The account of the "natural rarities" which this author gives is not very consistent with the philosophical tone which, as a disciple of his master Lord Verulam, "from whom I received my first light in this way," he adopts in the preface. Nothing, indeed, can be better than his statement of the principles of induction. "Had those men that have spent so much time and pains in writing voluminous comments on Aristotle, but laboured as diligently in writing comments upon nature, and (with that self-denial and indifference which becomes ingenuity in the dark) in trying to render a reason of such odd and odd appearances in things, though some of them had been but false positions; doubtless the philosophical part of learning would have been at a much better pass, and inquisition a great deal more happy and thriving than it is at this day."

winter. The sea lying before the mouths of such caverns, and they having a vast depth of mountain over them, their inward capacity must be defended from any rigid cold, which may be a means to preserve these fowl; and late in spring the returning strong sunbeams on the water, near the mouth of the cavern, may reanimate these animals, and bring them from their state of forgetfulness by degrees, to the use of life and motion."*

Such were the views entertained by the most intelligent naturalists less than a century since!

Some very curious notions as to the generation of certain birds were current until a comparatively recent period. Pontoppidan, while asserting that he did not himself believe that "ducks grew upon trees," yet admits that such was the popular belief. Harrison was not so cautious, and relates the circumstances in much detail:—
"If I should say how either these, or some other such fowl not much unlike to them, have bred of late times (for their place of generation is not perpetual, but as opportunity serveth, and the

^{*} Natural History of Birds. By George Edwards. Vol. iv. p. 220. Though somewhat voluminous, it is a careful and interesting compilation. The "dedication" is a literary curiosity:—

[&]quot;To God,

[&]quot;The one Eternal! the Incomprehensible! the Omnipresent, Omniscient, and Almighty Creator of all things that exist! from orbs immeasurably great to the minutest points of matter, this Atom is Dedicated and devoted with all possible gratitude, humiliation, worship, and the highest admiration of both body and mind,

[&]quot;By His most resigned, low, and humble creature, "George Edwards."

AT THE SEASIDE.

22

circumstances do minister occasion) in the Thames' mouth, perhaps some will not believe me. Yet such a thing hath there been seen, where a kind of fowle had his beginning upon a short tender shrub standing near unto the shore; from whence when their time came they fell downe either into the salt water and lived, or upon the dry land and perished,—as Pena has also noted."

But the parentage of the barnacle goose was a matter of more national interest, involving as it did grave political and ecclesiastical considerations. At the present day, on the coast of Brittany, the scaup duck, though very indifferent eating at the best, is in great request, members of the Catholic Church being permitted to eat it upon their fastdays, on the principle, of course, that it is less fowl Rome appears to be I osing her mediæval austerity, and, with her shrewd flexibility, adapting her asceticism to the culinary liberalism of the nineteenth century. At least, in her day of authority, so far from holding that ducks were fish, and therefore to be eaten of Fridays, it was a matter of very grave doubt whether barnacles were not to be regarded as fowl, and therefore, on the sixth day of the week, to be held forbidden "Howbeit," says Harrison, "neither and unclean, the inhabitants of this island, nor yet of Ireland, can readilie say whither they be fish or flesh; for although the religious there used to eat them as fish, yet elsewhere manie have been troubled for eating of them in times prohibited, for heretics and Lollards." It was no wonder, therefore, that he should have felt a justifiable anxiety in approaching so delicate a question; but the result of his investigations must have been anything but satisfactory to those Catholics who had espoused (more from taste than from conviction, perhaps) the piscatorial theory. "For my own part," he continues, "I have been very desirous to understand the utmost of the breeding of barnicles, and questioned with divers persons about the same. This present yeare of grace 1584, and month of Maie, going to the Court at Greenwich from London by bote, I saw sundry ships lying in the Thames, newly come home either from Barbarie or the Canarie Islands, on whose sides I perceived an infinite sort of shells to hang so thick as could be, one by another. Drawing near also, I tooke off ten or twelve of the greatest of them; and afterward having opened them I saw the proportion of a fowle in one of them more perfectly than in all the rest, saving that the head was not yet formed. Certainlie the feathers of the tale hung out of the shell at least two inches, the wings (almost perfect, touching form) were guarded with two shields proportioned to them, and likewise the breast-bone had a coverture also of like shelly substance; and altogether resembling the figure which Lobell and Pena do give forth in their description of this fowle, so that I am fully persuaded that it is either the barnicle that is engendered after one manner in these shells, or some other sea-fowle to us as yet unknown. the feathers appearing, and forme so apparent, it cannot be denied that some bird or other must proceed of this substance, which by falling from

the sides of ships in long voyages may come to some perfection."*

Is not this a fit theme for the Protestant eloquence of Dr. Cumming? The emancipation of the national appetite from the perilous uncertainty of the barnacle controversy, certainly ought not to be omitted from his intelligent estimate of the benefits achieved for us by the Reformation.

The Euphuists, among their other misdeeds, constructed a novel system of natural history. Their dishonesty was of a twofold kind. They could not find any facts in the actual world sufficiently absurd to correspond with their inflated ideas; so, to obtain the comparison, they were forced to create the fact. I have not Euphues at hand just now: else a paper of some interest might be written on Lily's Ornithology, containing certain traits of the feathered tribes rather calculated to enlarge Mr. Yarrel's mind.† Lily himself was the chief offender; but the whole set was implicated, down to Stephen Gosson, who, as the first of the Puritans, might have known better. "Aristotle thinketh," says the latter, in The School of Abuse, "that in great winds the bees carry little stones in their mouths to poyse their bodies, lest

^{*} Harrison's Description of England prefixed to Holinshed, pp. 38, 223.

[†] Here are a couple of specimens from his Alexander and Campaspe:—"Our travails are like the hares, which at one time bringeth forth, nourisheth, and engendereth again; or like the brood of Trochilus, whose eggs in the same moment they are laid become birds." "Where the rainbow toucheth the tree, no caterpillars will hang on the leaves; where the glow-worm creepeth in the night, no adder will go in the day."

they be carried away, or kept from their hives. The crane is said to rest upon one leg, and holding up the other, keeps a pebble in her claw; which as soone as the senses are bound by approach of sleep falls to the ground, and with the noyse of the knock against the earth, makes her awake, whereby she is ever ready to prevent the approach of her enemies. Geese are foolish birdes, yet when they fly over the Mount Taurus they shew great wisdome in their own defence: for they stoppe their pipes full of gravel to avoid gaggling, and so by silence escape the eagles."

Sir Thomas Browne took this eccentric ornithology to task in a chapter of his charming book, Pseudodoxia Epidemica, wherein he argues against it with his peculiarly grave and characteristic naïveté. That the swan sings before its death, is a belief, he admits, of great antiquity, but resting on no sufficient authority. "Surely he that is bit with a tarantula shall never be cured with this music; and with the same hope we expect to hear the harmonies of the spheres." Leland, I remember, in his Itinerary, tries to compromise the matter. "The spirite of the dying bird," he says, "labouring to pass through the long and narrow passage of her neck, makes a noise as if she did sing." The old notion no doubt took its rise from this remarkable formation of the swan's windpipe—an organ, as Mr. Yarrel has shewn, peculiarly unfitted for musical purposes, and contrived, as Sir Thomas shrewdly surmises, "to contain a larger quantity of air, whereby, being to feed on weeds at the bottom,

she might the longer space detain her head under water." That storks will live only in republics or free states, is a heresy which the Knight of Norwich, with his aristocratic associations, will by no means countenance. The Prophet "Jeremy," as he calls him, in a passage I have already quoted, alludes to the stork; and "Jeremy" lived under a monarchical government. Of course, if the stork invariably manifested the strong radical prejudices imputed to him, the Prophet could not have made his acquaintance, and would not certainly have alluded in a complimentary vein to an inveterate republican. That the flesh of peacocks corrupteth not, cannot indeed be altogether denied; but that "they are ashamed of their legs," is a malicious calumny. "Let them believe it who hold that any part can seem unhandsome in their eyes which hath appeared good and beautiful in their Maker's"—an argument which must settle the scoffers, I should think. If any reader, however, requires a more detailed refutation of these and similar heresies in natural history, he must turn to the book itself. Its peculiar charm consists in this, that the worthy gentleman's explanation is often more quaint and old-fashioned than the fiction which he assails. He saw clearly enough where something was wrong; but he had certain out-of-the-way theories of his own to which he was very fondly attached, and which sometimes led him further astray than if he had been content to accept the "vulgar error" itself.*

^{*} Gosson's School of Abuse, 1579; Sir Thomas Browne's Vulgar Errors, b. iii. c. 27, Pickering, 1835; Leland's Itinerary, vol. iii.

A good picture, like good claret, is a luxury which most honest people relish. Those grand Italian heads brought into daily contact with the poverty and grossness of ordinary life, cannot fail to produce a salutary effect,—like the superb service and the divine words of the Catholic ritual in the midst of selfish institutions and a corrupt society. Consequently, there are one or two in the Sanctuary, peeping out familiarly among cases of curious birds and well-filled shelves of English oak. They are spoils, like those of Napoleon, gathered in Italy, and they bring with them to this sombre land the gentle and monastic influences of the South. The one I value most is a copy from a picture by Ridolpho Ghirlandajo in the Uffizi,—that noble Florentine gallery, very dear to every artist, as it may well be, for its own sake, but memorable to us for evermore because of a still sweet face, with Titian's golden hair, and the grave grey eyes of Raphael, and the royal simpleness of Murillo, but the face of a sweeter Mary than Titian or Raphael or Murillo ever painted, and to whose devout beauty even Millais, with his perfect humanness, has done scant justice. Ghirlandajo, however, it may be briefly said, that it represents a saint, with quaint and angular devoutness, restoring a dead body to life. The rest of the figures are sufficiently insipid: but the face of the boy is unique in art. The union of the lineaments of death with the fresh young life which is once more returning to the lip and the

^{1538 (}Second edition, Oxford, 1744); Linnaan Transactions, vols. iv., xv., and xvi.

eye—the awed and awful serenity of the infant face which has looked upon God—the wise sedate composure of the child who has penetrated within the secrets of the Unseen: these haunt one with the suggestion of a mystery upon which no mortal artist could have looked and lived. And who was Ridolpho Ghirlandajo? A second-rate Florentine artist, who never painted another great picture in his life, and yet who has here told us a story which no other painter ever attempted to tell. Was it some sudden, subtle flash of poetic insight, or had he, like the old Trojan hero, by divine permission, gone down even unto Hades? Assumption by Fra Angelico came from Sienna a miniature Mary, rich in gold, and azure, and angelic trumpeters, and with Fiesole's wonderful expression of patient ineffable tenderness. chivalrous head of the old Spanish Don, Velasquez, frowns out of the darkness; and here, in the sunshine, is Guido's Bacchus, crowned with purple grapes and glorious mellow-tinted autumn leaves. Over the ample antique hearth is a fair copy of Claude's Molino; the snow-white sails, the picturesque Italian life, the purple of the distant hill, the clear blue water of the Tyrrhenian Sea, the soft rosy effulgence upon the clouds, like the delicate pink that tinges the cheek of Cytherea, the rich dark shadows of the southern woods, what can be more delicious among the drifting mists and the stormy rains that vex the Mare Tene-Beneath it, and resting on a slab of brosum? polished granite, is a single piece of sculpture the young Augustus, a boyish head, of girlish beauty, as still and tranquil and ominous as the tiger-cub asleep in its lair!

Does Mr. Carlyle's maxim hold good?—Does the portrait of a man enable you to divine his biography? We can test it here. The hideous satyr, leering upon us out of those bloodshot sagacious eyes, is the last Lord Lovat, whom Hogarth painted in the Tower the day before they hanged the old rogue. This is Hogarth's picture, and though perhaps more like a burlesque than anything the great satirist ever did, is said not to be a caricature. There are three portraits of the Marquis of Montrose, which tell their own story; first, the one painted by Jameson, when the Earl was a lad of seventeen; in which signs of conscious power, and more mature composure "than should be in one so young," may be traced; and then two-by Jameson and Gerard Honthorst -of the man; a brave and open, but sad-faced and sallow gentleman, dressed in the sable suit he always wore after the king's death. So he may have looked that wild day when he landed from the Orkneys, the royal standard in black, and Nil Medium upon his own. His lifelong rival, "Gillespie Grumach," hangs beneath him—the unkempt red hair, and the hard, sour, vindictive scowl, presenting a marked contrast to the grave but winning beauty of the Great Marquis. Of all the Gordons, George, Lord Gordon, the eldest son of the chief, was the only one who magnanimously forgave Montrose the old wrong he had done their house; and that fine head—not strikingly handsome, but speaking of honour, honesty, and steadfastness in every linemust be a true likeness of the gallant gentleman who fell at Alford. But if these are sufficiently characteristic, there are many that conflict with This mild and humane Mr. Carlyle's doctrine. countenance—a humorous twinkle hovering about the eyes—belonged to "the bluidy Advocate," Sir George Mackenzie of Rosehaugh; that venerable white-haired prelate, whose refined and intellectual features, and thin masterful mouth, suggest the acute student or the scholar great in Greek verbs, is the notorious Sharpe, who perished for his sins on Magus Muir. Mr. Mark Napier has asked us to arrest our judgment on "Dundee;" and unless he can shew good cause for the appeal, Mr. Carlyle's test will not serve. For the most winning gentleman in the room is John Grahame. of almost girlish loveliness; soft, tender, effeminate, and voluptuous as the Antinous in the Albano; one tinge of sadness, one touch of scorn,—such, if we can believe the artist, was the fell "Claverse," who in cold blood, and with his own woman-like hand, slaughtered the saints of God.

The studies of animal life are effective and felicitous, though not by Landseer. Many birds of tasteful but chastened plumage—for there is none of the gorgeous finery of the Tropics about the active and serviceable bipeds that have to contend with the hardships of the northern winter—are grouped together in as natural a fashion as the circumstances admit. The white breast of a marrot half conceals the cunningly tinted egg on which it rests, while its mate looks out meanwhile from over the rocky nest at the grey dawn which

mantles on the sea. Above them, a prolonged row of the common guillemot stand so perpendicularly and painfully erect, that one is tempted to believe they must somehow have undergone a regimental training in acquiring this martial gait. A diver in motley protracts a coquettish flirtation with her red-throated swain; and the sensitive, caressing, petulant motion of the birds, as they sail buoyantly along the beach, has been gracefully and piquantly arrested. Then there is a fierce, though somewhat humorous contest between a domestic circle of rabbits and a pugnacious puffin, whose wonderful bill and variegated plumage contrast effectively with the family in drab, whose burrow he is feloniously attempting to storm. A black guillemot, in its summer garb, flies lightly along the grey sea, that is already breaking into foam before the low breeze that bodes the night. In all his glory the great north loon breasts gallantly the Arctic billows; and anon a fairy-like group of miniature terns retreat hastily upon their gauzy wings, in rapid and clamorous alarm. Within another frame, a pair of the lesser falcons angrily contend for an unfortunate linnet, and their flashing eyes and ruffled plumage indicate to the life the passion that agitates their little valorous hearts. On the other side a jack snipe, with a leer of malicious intelligence lighting up his partially-closed eye, stands placidly among the watery reeds; and near him, upon the bleached sand of the stream that whimples through the sedge, a purple heron watches a

black-backed minnow with the earnestness characteristic of his grave and courtly connexion.*

From the old Manor House a somewhat steep and precipitous bank leads down to the shore of the bay. The bay exactly resembles an inland loch—it is so completely hemmed in that only a narrow channel is left for the ebb and flow of the tide. Here it is almost always calm—the sea ripple dies gently upon the yellow sand—any day in the year you can see the whole formation of

* The art that can produce such effects cannot be altogether worthless; and taxidermy, I think, in its more artistic functions, has been unfairly treated. An acquaintance with it adds greatly, at least, to the enjoyment of the day's sport, and takes away the regret which one cannot help feeling in marring, as out of mere wantonness, a rare or beautiful bird. If you are effeminate in your tastes, you may hand over the elementary business to a subordinate; but you had much better take the scalpel yourself, and learn at once the anatomy of your subject. It is, however, after the introductory passages that to the taxidermist comes the tug of war. Any man may indeed become a bird-stuffer, in the perverted sense of the term—that is to say, he may be able, in obedience to certain laws of motion, to put a given quantity of flax or straw within the skin which he has ruthlessly torn from the back of an unhappy biped; but what of that? Will he in his calmer moments dare to tell us that this tortured and afflicted animal, vainly attempting to stand at ease on its mangled legs, is the likeness of anything in the heaven above, or in the earth beneath, or in the water under the earth? Certainly not! Taxidermy is as much an art as painting or sculpture; and there are perhaps as many qualities—as much skill, patience, imagination, insight—required to excel in the one as in the others. Depend upon it that it is no easy matter to give to an unsightly bundle of skin and feathers the indescribable energy and coherence of form which distinguishes life from matter. You may certainly succeed in producing a depressing illustration of animal wretchedness; but without the delicate touch and the accurate observation of the patient naturalist, you will never convey a true idea of the harmonious symmetry, the exquisitely flexile life, which characterise our feathered relations.

the bottom through the limpid and breezeless water. To the north, beyond the rocks which guard the entrance to this salt lake, spreads a great extent of sandy shore, dimpled into bays, and broken near the centre by the estuary of the Ithuna, which there falls into the sea. There is nothing peculiarly picturesque in the line of coast; still, it is not without a certain bleak beauty, especially when the sun strikes athwart the sandhills, and throws a golden line between the threatening sky and the murky water. I do not know if it be generally felt, but a low line of barren bent or moor, beaten by and lying along the margin of the wintry sea, always conveys to me an impression of desolateness that nothing else When the tide is full, the river mouth does. swells into a lake which runs some three or four miles inland; but at low water nearly the whole of this surface is uncovered, and it is then the resort of thousands of wading birds, who find abundant food in the shellfish and marine insects which the tide leaves behind. On both sides the banks stretch away into sandy bents, among which the rabbit burrows and the curlew breeds. Returning to the point of the coast from which we started, and sailing in a southerly direction, the shore gradually becomes more precipitous, until the rocks assume a wildness, picturesqueness, and terrible grandeur, which I would in vain attempt to describe. During the spring and summer, these rocks are whitened by clouds of snowy birds, who then gather together by a kind of tacit understanding from all quarters of the ocean. Such is

the appearance of the coast—the interior is not less characteristic. Immediately around the lawn, with its stunted masses of brushwood, there is a considerable extent of cultivated land, where the partridge-shooting in October is not by any means to be despised. From this the country rises up in gentle undulations till it reaches the heather. These flat, dreary, uplying moors, with the thatched cottage of the crofter, and his scanty patch of cultivation, scattered along their borders, stretch away toward the west for many miles, and form a district where the wailing cry of the plover, and the hoarse crow of the gor-cock, are almost the only sounds that disturb the solitude. hollows the autumn rains collect, and form enormous bogs, in which, as they are quite impassable except occasionally in the height of summer, the snipe, the mallard, and the teal bring up their families in perfect seclusion. Among these marshy fens, when the snow is on the ground, and the whole land hard with winter-frost,

On midnights blue and cold, Long strings of geese come clanging from the stars.

Still further inland there are extensive fir woods, worth a visit were it only for that most gorgeous and picturesque combination—a golden sunset seen through the ragged masses of the pine! Woodcock and pheasants frequent these sombre covers, and among the gnarled oaks the delicately fashioned roe moves silently past, like the stealthy creature of a dream! And as a frame for the picture, beyond the moor and the forest rise up one over the other a long succession of snow-

capped mountains. You cannot well believe what a comfort these cool white crests become to us in the lovely summer night. The Alpine ridge sprinkled with snow, and brought out fresh and roseate against the horizon, has always been a favourite with the painter; but no painting ever rightly conveys to me the sense of mysterious depth and solemnity which the presence of the inviolate and virgin snow communicates to the blue void beyond! Who can forget the Jungfrau, hanging like a golden cloud in the sky, long after night has fallen upon all the valleys?

The rocks of which I have just spoken lie within a few miles of us, and few things can be more enjoyable than a day spent among them in spring—either by land or water. About the centre of the "Heughs," as they are called by the fishermen, they converge into a large land-locked bay, and there is a perilous seat half-way down the cliff, where I have often sat for hours watching the on-goings of a most orderly society. The sea is very worthy of our truest love at all times; but never more so than here. The cliff hangs overhead, and shuts out all communication with the prosaic country behind—the country of corn, and turnips, and oxen, and red-faced farmers, and agricultural principles. We are done with the old world, and the new stretches away from our feet to the furthest horizon, a luminous plain of It is the ocean itself that lies below us, mapped out into great spaces of light and shade—of light where the April sunshine simmers upon the sea, of shade as the soft breeze follows

the cloud along the water. We are all conversant with the plastic character of this season, the rapid and noiseless changes of expression that pass over the face of the sky in the course of a forenoon; and surely the April shadows that shift upon the sea, are even more fickle and capricious than those that cross the land. And is not the heaven that arches the main richer and more brilliant than it is elsewhere? What a delicious depth of colour has been shed over the nearer sky! how delicate those more fickle tints that linger along the horizon! how exquisite the grace and intricacy of that fretted network of cloud which clings to the ether! how pure and lustrous those great white masses overhead that sweep slowly away toward the purple hills! Among the shadows, white sails in the blue distance speed noiselessly hither and thither, and closer to the rocks groups of auks caress each other with their bills, and enjoy the languid motion of the sea. And about us there is a great quiet—a cold and stately seclusion broken though it be by the rustling murmur of the water upon the rocks, and the shrill complaints of a varied and animated life. The whole of this sweet, calm, Italian-like bay is shut in by the strange devices of a vagrant imagination—devices more quaint and daring than any artist ever ventured to work into his marble. The bold belfry of the Florentine, the crazy minaret of the Mussulman, the solemn strength of Notre Dame, the network meshes of the exquisite Antwerp spire,—all crowded and mingled together without the slightest deference to the scruples of architectural etiquette. Sportive columns, fantastic arches, eccentric domes, bridges fitly dedicated to the devil, long quiet coves in which the sea is always silent, proud defiant buttresses, against which the white passion of the surf never relents! Fashioned by the action of the water upon the rock through long silent centuries, no poet was ever visited by fancies more wild and forlorn than may here be traced, wrought in the stormy architecture of the waves! And even these craggy precipices feel the gentle influences of the spring-time. The pale convolvulus creeps timidly along the giddy height; the blue violet and the yellow primrose peer curiously from among the long rank grasses; tufts of sea-pink and feathery ferns grow down to the very margin of the water, and touch the black and stern face of the rocks with a bright and delicate beauty.

There is one rock, about a mile from the shore, which, at high water, is entirely covered, and which always strikes me by its desolate loneliness. It represents, I believe, that "Craig of Classnessie," on which one of the most tragical murders recorded in the criminal jurisprudence of the district took place. An unfortunate tenant having incurred the displeasure of his superior, was bound hand and foot, and carried in a boat to this same rock, where (as the old indictment proceeds), "having been left, the tide overflowed the said Craig, and so he was pitifully drowned, and carried away to the main-ocean sea." What a frightful death! Fancy the wretch there when the boat has left, and the plash of its oars has

died away toward the distant shore—how he listens to the dull monotonous beat of the water against the rock as the inevitable tide creeps slowly towards him—how he gazes, hour after hour, painfully through the hot sunshine for any saving sail—how he consents at length to abandon hope, when he feels the salt water rising about his cheek, and the soft ripple of the summer sea, wiping, with a malicious gentleness, the angry foam from his lip! The crag was, moreover, at one time a favourite haunt with the capricious sisterhood of the ocean; and even yet there are few of the fishermen who have not seen, as she sank beneath the cold water in the grey light of the early dawn—

The cold strange eyes of a little mermaiden, And the gleam of her golden hair.

Upon these youthful scions of the sea our modern scientific infidelity is absolutely silent; but happily Pontoppidan and other devout men have described "I shall not call them with sufficient precision. it," says the former, "the mermaid's offspring, yet one might give it this name till further examined into. This creature is often caught on hooks, and is well known to most of the fishermen. They are of different sizes; some are of the bigness of an infant of half a year old; others of a year, and others again as big as a child of three years old; of this last size there was one lately taken at Selloe Sound. The upper part was like a child, but the rest like a fish. Those who caught it threw it directly into the sea. Sometimes the peasants

take them home to their houses, and, as they say, give them milk which they drink. They tell us that those creatures then roll their eyes about strangely, as if it was out of curiosity or surprise, to see what they had not seen before. Those who take them home do it in hopes of having something foretold by them; but they do not keep them above twenty-four hours, considering themselves bound to row out to sea, and put them down in the same place where they found them."

The Scrath is not by any means a lively bird; he entertains serious, not to say gloomy views, on most of the questions of the day. I have seen the cormorants who frequent this rock, sit together for hours without uttering a syllable to each other —in a kind of dyspeptic dejection. Apart from his sentiments upon serious subjects, this is probably the result of a system of over-feeding, for even with the most perfect digestion such excessive eating must tell upon the spirits. They are, moreover, somewhat speculative birds, and employ their leisure in attempting various impracticable experiments. They seem in particular, to entertain a theory that they are intended by Providence to live upon invisible pinnacles where a titmouse could not find footing. The consequences may be easily foreseen. No sooner is the unwieldy monster seated, than he loses his balance, and a fierce and violent flapping of his sable pinions is required to prevent him from falling to the bottom. will convince him of the fallacy of the notion, and it would be difficult to determine what satisfaction or enjoyment he can derive from an insane proceeding like this, which so ill consorts moreover with the sepulchral gravity of his appearance.*

* The cormorant is only one of a multitude of birds who frequent these rocks, and who are now busily employed sitting upon their nests, or sweeping up in their curious oblique way from the sea with food. Marrots, razor-bills, and puffins, that during the winter have been scattered far and wide over the ocean, have returned en masse to seek a birth-place for their young. These sea-birds do not commence to sit until about the first or second week in May; but they generally arrive at least a month before that period. For two or three years I have noticed great numbers scattered over the breeding-places towards the end of March, when, after having remained a day or two, as if to select their respective stations, they again quit the vicinity, and do not return for some weeks. I do not think that this temporary sojourn has been observed by any of our ornithologists, and it is an interesting and curious fact. Having selected their several stations—and each family appropriates a distinct one to itself—they make their nests, and commence to sit. The common gull and the puffin are the earliest. I have generally found their brown-and-white eggs about the beginning of May. The razor-bills and the guillemots follow, and the kittiwake is the latest, though, in point of time, it arrives before any of the others. The young do not appear until the month of July, and being ready to fly, or at least to swim, in the course of a couple of weeks, the whole colony has commonly left the cliffs by the 12th of August. There is a pleasant fiction in reference to the young of the guillemot, suggested by Waterton, and sanctioned by Yarrel. These excellent naturalists assert that the old marrot carries its young from the nest to the sea; and this because they have seen young guillemots in the water who were quite unable to fly. For myself I have never seen the old guillemot perform any such office, and I do not think it does. Very young birds are certainly often found in the water; but I have seen them quite as young, frightened by the noise of a shot, tumble right out of the nest into the sea, dive at once, and rising after a short interval, begin to swim about as though they had been accustomed for years to the water, and to a sheer fall every day of a couple of hundred feet. It is quite true that from some situations they could not fall into the sea; but I am convinced that on these they remain till they are able to fly. Any one who has climbed among the rocks in the beginning of August must have observed, especially in the nests placed on the land-side of a ravine, numbers of young birds of very considerable size, and quite able upon a near

The small sparrow-hawk breeds among the more inland rocks in considerable numbers, and in what is called the Bloody Hole, a pair of peregrines have had their eyrie from time immemorial. Either the eggs (of which there are seldom fewer than four, of a dull deep red) or the young are taken away every year, and yet the old birds return season after season to the same spot, with the most reckless hardihood. They appear early in spring, and by the 7th of April last year, I found two eggs in the nest. The peregrine is a very watchful bird, and the moment one approaches the rocks where it has its eyrie, it rises high into the air, and commences a storm of harsh, grating, and unmusical sounds, which, as the bird itself is often quite invisible, seem to come right out of the blue overhead. The eyrie of which I am now speaking, is placed on one side of a ravine, and from the other, which is perhaps a hundred yards off, one can see right under the overhanging rock into the nest. When the falcon is present on her eggs, the bluish black of the body, the whitish feathers about the neck, and the bright complacent dilated eye, contrast curiously with

approach to shift for themselves. And I feel pretty certain that when once in the water they never attempt to return to the rocks, but make for the main ocean at once. Often when sailing along the coast of a summer evening more than six miles from the breeding-place, I have met the old bird and its single young one moving out to sea; the young so small that had it not been for the peculiar deeptoned melancholy note of the parent (resembling the 'coo of the cushat' at night), which is quite unlike its usual cry, and is never heard except as a note of warning or endearment to its young, I should not have discovered that there was any other than the single old bird near.

the brown soil of the nest. This is the safest post for observation, and you must be very sure of hand and foot, if you desire a more minute inspection of the interior. The eyrie is situated on a sort of promontory, along the summit of which there is just room for a narrow footpath; but this is connected with the mainland, by a tongue of land, which fine as a razor at the top, descends abruptly on either side a sheer fall of five hundred feet. Along one side, however, there are a few projecting angles, and at intervals a bush of the common sea-pink has taken root among the crevices, and clings hardily to the cliff. Now if you will lay your arms across the top, and so partly remove the weight of your body from these frail supports, you may manage, if you are careful, to find sufficient footing to carry you across, for not more than a dozen steps are required. But as you value your life, keep your eyes fixed upon the rock before you, and do not look down to the beach where your boat lies like a large cockle-shell, and the surf dashes against the great granite boulders which have been dwarfed into pebbles, else you will feel a sickness steal upon you, which in a moment will paralyze all your Having accomplished this feat, you must keep along the summit until you arrive at the smooth polished rock which lies right across the path, and bars further progress forward. advance cautiously round its south side till you reach the corner, and peering cautiously over, you will see the nest below you. It is some twelve feet down, and the only way by which you can

reach it is to spread yourself upon the flat beaten rock, after the fashion of the Austrian eagle, and by every contrivance make your fall as light as possible, for the narrow platform beneath, to which you must descend, is not to be implicitly trusted. It forms the peregrine's larder, and a very dainty and sumptuous fellow he is, you see. Mingled with the light feathers of unhappy "Tamies" and deluded "Kitties," there is the heathery brown of the muir-cock, and the golden plumage of the plover. But do not suppose that the owner will stand patiently this invasion of his territory. course you must leave your gun upon the mainland, and the shrewd fellow knows instinctively that from your attack he is safe. A storm of shrill complaints uttered about your ears is at no time particularly pleasant, even when they come from Mary's rosy lips, and the chance of a dig into your eyes from these well-armed claws, when your hands are quite full otherwise, you do not by any means And when you have reached the most giddy point in your progress, ten to one he comes sweeping past so close, in his swift noiseless way, that you can feel the breath of his wings upon your face. However, you have passed the perils, so put the three downy, awkward, owl-like little fellows into your cap, and retrace your steps, as best you may, to the mainland,—leaving the forlorn parents to haunt their "harried" nest.

The position selected by the puffins is called the Scrath's rock, and is separated from the shore by a narrow channel. It is a fine specimen of granite architecture; a huge rent in the centre forms a magnificent arch, through which the blue seas and the white sails are seen sparkling as in a vignette. Sailing past the rocks towards it, we begin to appreciate the extraordinary number of birds that are here collected together.

Above us in worship

Flutter the terns, and the sea-gulls sweep past us on silvery pinions, Echoing softly our laughter.

Files of marrots in marching order, have possession of every inch of footing along the face; razor-bills beat swiftly past on their short wings, in quick monotonous flight; and the air is really darkened by the clouds of gulls that sweep overhead, screeching to each other as if distracted. As we approach the Scrath's rock, the puffins come out of their holes and gaze curiously down at us, their white breasts and red bills contrasting with the short, stiff, unsavoury grass, manured by the salt of the sea-foam among which they stand. Their nests are constructed after the form of a rabbit burrow, and to obtain a sufficient number they have been forced to undermine nearly the whole turf on the top of the island, so that it is difficult to walk across it without sinking through the thin layer of earth, right into the middle of a family circle. The puffin is a most absurd-looking bird—an effect produced by its enormously disproportioned triangular bill, which resembles nothing so much as a clumsy mask stuck over its face for disguise. It is a great favourite, however, and all kinds of extraordinary stories are told about it, which are supported upon the whole by the wise and suspicious expression of

its countenance, "With his claws and his beak," says Pontoppidan, "he defends himself against the raven, his enemy, whom he holds by the throat, and will carry him out to sea and drown him before he loses his hold." The same naturalist tells us, also, that "in his nest he lies on his back;" and that when one is stunned the others gather about him, "and never leave off pecking till he revives,"— a somewhat curious mode of I often find the young in the nests, restoration. and sometimes of such a size as really to favour the tradition that the parents administer sorrel leaves to reduce their size, and enable them to quit a birth-place which might otherwise be converted into a tomb.

Some of the caverns along the coast are very grand, and one opposite this island is especially It is entered by a low and narrow mouth, which only permits the passage of a small boat at low water, but gradually rises and widens into a spacious dome. On the land side there is a corresponding passage which has never been thoroughly examined, and which, to judge from the frequent splashes we have heard in that direction since we entered—as of heavy bodies dropping into the water—is doubtless frequented by the seals, who, with the rock pigeons and cormorants who build their nests about the eaves, are the only tenants of these secluded fastnesses. The upper dome is very fine—after the manner of the grand, gloomy fanes of Eastern Europe, where the roof retreats into grim darkness, and the flickering flambeaux only serve at times to strike into bright relief a heavy

rafter, or a carved line of delicate cornice, or the gilt wings of an angel hovering above the aisle: but perhaps the under-world is even more interesting. Through the limpid water we can see the black-backed fishes moving stealthily among their forests of tangle; shining white pebbles lying softly upon the yellow sand; sea-weeds, ruddy and crimson with the freshest blood of the sea; long-legged crabs walking daintily among the sharp rocks; sea-urchins near the surface, prickly as porcupines; a great blue lobster at the door of his hole, inhaling the sweet morning air;—the whole purified, idealized, and, though not three fathoms from our feet, remote and distant as in a dream!

Besides the birds I have mentioned, many others breed among the rocks. There are commonly one or two pairs of the black guillemot, but the nest is always placed so far within the cliff that it is difficult to obtain its eggs. In its summer plumage it is a singularly beautiful bird (as every one knows who has seen Mrs. Blackburn's charming sketches), and from a distance resembles a richly-coloured butterfly, flitting hither and thither among the sombre rocks. I have often, when watching this guillemot in the ravine where it builds, been amused by the contests of a raven, who has his nest in a somewhat similar but more inaccessible position, with a great party of itinerant jackdaws, who are here continually on the out-look These little beggars seem to take a for plunder. pleasure in annoying their more venerable neigh-They irritate him in every possible way, and at this time, with his various responsibilities, he

is very easily excited—more so than is at all consistent with his dignified tranquillity of character. Thus he has constant exercise among them. sooner has he started on a little experimental excursion through the neighbourhood, than they approach the sanctuary where his precious eggs are deposited, and then he returns precipitately, and discharging himself violently among the marauders, obliges them to keep a more respectful distance—and all this amid vociferous cawings and expressions of clamorous discontent. And as he has hardly lighted on the adjacent pinnacle, and indulged in a few hoarse congratulatory croaks, before the same lesson has to be repeated, by nightfall his energies must be perfectly exhausted.

This is the aspect of the rocks in the month of May. It is striking, for the sake of the contrast, to return in autumn. The breeding-places are deserted, the cheerful sounds of a varied and beautiful life are stilled, the wind moans among the deserted caves, and a solitary sea-gull occupies an airy pinnacle, and listens dejectedly by itself to the monotonous wail of the water!

The evenings of this season of the year—when Spring is bursting into Summer—are often very lovely, and to the naturalist full of interest. Through the open window I hear the trout leaping in the burn that whimples through the glen, and the sullen plunge of the otter as he takes the water from his hole. From the opposite side of the bay come at intervals the hoarse and

querulous notes of the partridge, and the shrill and plaintive call of the curlew, who have their nests among the sandhills beside the sea. A great grey moth stirs into uneasy life against the window-pane, while a pair of bats flit noiselessly through the twilight. Along the West the purple tinge grows slowly fainter and more faint, and now the golden-crested clouds hang athwart the sky like faded drapery.

The sea, as I have mentioned, forms, some miles to the "Nor'ard" a large estuary, which swells into a miniature lake when the tide is full, but where, at low water, the whole space of sand and sea-weed is left bare, except the narrow channel in the centre, through which are carried the scanty waters of the Ithuna.

There twice a-day the Severn fills,

The salt sea-water passes by,

And hushes half the babbling Wye,

And makes a silence in the hills.

I have, once or twice, when fishing at this season, slept among the sand-hills on the north bank, and it is curious to observe the changes that take place during the course of a summer night. The unquiet and unrest of the day are gradually subdued as the evening descends. Anon, the hoarse cry of the heron, the shrill plaint of the plover, or the wild cry of some belated sea-bird, alone vary the quiet murmur that comes seaward across the hills. Then there is an hour or so of perfect stillness in the deep of the dead night, which lasts until the grey light begins slowly to gather along the sullen sky. When we are able to look abroad, the world

is motionless and inanimate, and a cloud of stifling mildew hangs over the river. The sheep had begun to bleat when it was yet dark, and now the voices of countless water-birds, who have been waiting for the deposit which the retreating tide leaves behind, answer each other mournfully through the damp air of the early morning.

The estuary of the Ithuna is a favourite resort of the sea-trout—the most beautiful of its scaly brethren. Fishing in the tide-way, as it is practised on (or rather in, for the fisher is commonly up to the armpits) the rivers of the north of Scotland, does not require any very delicate manipu-The fly is nothing better than a rough imitation of the sand-eel, which in these situations is the abundant and favourite food of the trout. It is trolled rapidly, and in a very primitive way, some two or three inches below the surface; but the most accomplished angling could not prove more effective: and on a breezy morning the basket of the merest tyro may be speedily filled with splendid fellows, weighing from two to four Splendid fellows, indeed!—as in the pounds. white scales of their burnished armour they cast themselves, panic stricken, high into the sunlight, or with dogged pertinacity strain the line along the bottom of the pool, in the wild hope to rid themselves of the obstinate little enemy who, despite their struggles, will viciously cling to them But if the lift be too clear, and the till death. breeze too fickle, there is still no lack of occupation for any man who knows how to use his eyes. It is, you perceive, a thriving locality,—densely peopled. A line of sentry herons, standing sedately, and with an affectation of infinite gravity, are posted along the margin of the river. They have not moved a muscle of their long faces for the last hour, and their reflection on the still water is as steady and consistent as if they had been carved in stone. Wading birds of all kinds are scattered over the sands, and among the pools of salt water which the tide has left in the hollows. Both the whaup and the whimbrel appear in considerable force, and there are dense clouds of the dunlin and the green-brown sandpiper. Every minute touched by some imaginary alarm, they take to wing, and shift, and wheel, and retreat, and execute the flank movement against the enemy, with exquisite dexterity and precision the noise of their many wings sounding as they approach like the beat of summer rain upon the water. The bank on the opposite side is decorated with the architectural designs of the sandmartin; and the swallows who have their nests in the eaves and crannies of the old castle upon the shore, have come up the river for their mid-day Marching majestically about are a pair of the great black-backed gulls, and a crowd of young mottled kittiwakes are bending and bowing over the water, just resting the tips of their wingfeathers upon it, as they pick, with shrill screams, the sea-weed from its surface. Some years ago I caught one of the former here, whose wing had been injured by a shot, and carried him off captive to the kitchen-garden, where he was introduced to a select society of the smaller gulls.

For some days he was extremely shy and obstinate, resolutely refused to eat, and shut himself up in a pet within the shelter of an inaccessible prickly-thorn. His voracity, however, proved stronger than his obstinacy, and he eventually capitulated—at discretion. He soon became nearly as tame as his companions, though an attentive observer might always perceive a certain dignity and reserve in his character. He would permit no familiarity from the other gulls, and one day he almost killed outright an unfortunate kitty who had incautiously possessed herself of a titbit which he had designed for himself. Indeed, the only bird with whom he ever manifested any desire to become on intimate terms was a female peregrine, whose lustrous black eyes had evidently won his affections. As the admiration, however, was not returned, he prudently kept out of reach of her claws; but he would stand by the hour on his yellow legs, and gaze with drowsy emotion on the charmer, through the barred windows of her cage. He was choked last year while indiscreetly attempting to swallow a large perch, and, like the German lover, died with his eyes fixed on the abode of his mistress.

A few pairs of the common sheldrake burrow among the bents by the water-side, and the trail that passes near where we are sitting, indicates the route they follow from their nests to the sea. It is with the puffin, one of the few birds that burrow like rabbits, and they sometimes go so far down that it is difficult to dig them up. The holes which they select have generally two

entrances, "so that," says the old Swedish naturalist, "if the one is not stopped, it is in vain to look for the bird at the other." The young make for the water immediately upon being hatched, and I have frequently seen a large family in the middle of the stream, all of whom, to judge from their size, must have been in the shell on the previous morning. They swim for such morsels with remarkable rapidity, but if the water is low and clear they are easily kept in sight. When alarmed, they dive at once about half-way to the bottom, and then swim straight out, until, obliged to rise for air, they gradually approach the sur-But even at that early age they are quite acquainted with the necessity of concealment for instinct is, as it were, born with the bird—and the point of the bill is the only part of the whole body which shews above the water. They are wild little morsels when caught, and are so delicate and fastidious that it is difficult to rear them. The old drakes, however, are gorgeous birds, and the rich red and white of their plumage give colour and vivacity to our gray sea and sombre Notwithstanding his brilliant and gallant bents. bearing, Pontoppidan's narrative conveys a sad impression of his domestic relations: for "when the eggs are taken or destroyed, the cock," it appears, "beats the hen with his wings, and makes her cry most dismally."

Further on in the season many varieties may be shot here, as they fly up and down, following the course of the stream in all its windings and turnings. During the autumn there are great flocks of mire-ducks, who come down from the inland marshes when the breeding season is over; and in winter, the brilliant hareld, the sad-coloured pintail, and sombre scoters, are scattered in little fishing parties all about the mouth of the river, just where the fresh water mingles with the sea.

Though a somewhat heretical opinion, I make bold to confess that I entertain intense respect for the hooded crow. Ravens and "hoodies," it is well known, live for ever, and have therefore plenty of spare time to acquire the rudiments of a Indeed, I am quite prepared to sound education. back the hoody for sense and sagacity against any of his more respectable relatives. Even the most prejudiced sportsman must admit that he is a bird of surpassing versatility. The annosa cornix,* with his air of a remote and venerable antiquity, is always at home, and equal to every emergency. We have all heard—the story is as old as the Arabian Nights—of the astute "hoody" who, having, like some other bipeds, an amiable weakness for fresh oysters, opened the shells by allowing them to fall from a considerable height among the rocks; from which fact Dr. Fleming very wisely argues that this versatile bird is not so black as he looks; and I have witnessed a feat which shews that, in furnishing his larder, he is quite as dexterous in the water as on the land. Stationed on a large stone, a yard into the river, with his gray monk's cowl thrown back over his

^{*} The Annosa Cornix is, according to Horace (Car. iv. 17), aqua augur—a reference doubtless to the flocks of crows which collect together, and the tameness they manifest, previous to rainy or stormy weather.

shoulders, an ancient anchorite sat gazing into the water that ran past his perch with the most inscrutable gravity. It was during a hard frost last January, when even a hoody must have experienced difficulty in obtaining the usual supplies. With my duck-glass I watched him for some time, and at length saw him plunge his head, heron-like, right into the stream, and after a short struggle at the bottom, reappear with a large fresh-water flounder in his bill. Having secured it firmly he took to wing, and lighting on terra firma, began his repast with relish. I had never happened to hear of the crow actually fishing,* but judging from the knowing way in which this old gentleman handled his hook, he must have been bred to the craft.

Beyond the sandhills a coil of jagged rocks run for a considerable distance into the sea, and on one of them are the ruins of the old castle of the lords of the district—a noble and lordly house, associated with innumerable grim and romantic histories. On the mainland opposite is a small village, tenanted by the fisher people, whose boats

[&]quot;I have seen the carren crows, so cunning also by their own industry of late, that they have used to soar over great eiders, and suddenlie coming downe have caught a small fish in their feet, and gone away withal without wetting of their wings."—(Harrison's Description of England prefixed to Holingshed's Chronicle, 1586). Harrison's natural history, however, is seldom very trustworthy—as we may judge from his remarks on the sparrow-hawk: "This only I find worthy the noting, that the sparrow-hawk is an enemie to young children, as is also the ape; but of the peacock she is marvellouslie afraid, and so appalled, that all courage and stomach is taken from her upon the sight thereof."—p. 227.

are drawn up out of the tide-way, on the yellow sands of the cove. The cottages are strung with wonderful dexterity over the very face of the cliff, and their inmates must make a precocious acquaintance with the perils of a rock life. Seen from a distance they present an appearance of most picturesque confusion. A quaint gableend, with a preposterous little window, looks coquettishly over the shoulder of a high-peaked duenna; one old-fashioned mansion has mounted bodily upon the back of its neighbour: were a single wall in the lower tier to give way, the whole community would incontinently topple into the sea. Slippery steps, compounded of mud, and water, and the entrails of slaughtered fish, connect the various stories of this perpendicular burgh, and lead ultimately, after a series of successful manœuvres, to the beach on the one side, and the upper world on the other. Nets, and great black pots, and dried fish, and the wings of sea-fowl, are suspended along the walls; and ducks, and skurries, who have been made captive in their youth, and a large scrath, with a look of insatiate gluttony stamped on his ugly face, explore the dim recesses of a primæval ash pit, which has not been cleaned since the foundation of the city. Amongst the dirt, innumerable little bundles of rags and tatters—the fertile progeny of the sea -wallow with unspeakable zest, and as you discover amid these parcels of filth the bright eye and the roguish smile, you are more than ever impressed with the unquenchable élan of boy-A sow, great with young, waddles lazily

from one tempting abomination to another, and disputes with lean and weather-beaten curs the savoury nuisances of the dungheap. The men are out at work in their boats, but were they present you would see as fine specimens of human nature as you will meet with in Europe—stalwart fellows, with light eyes and bright complexions, —the descendants of the fair-haired Northmen. Between the castle and the village lies a deep ravine, which, when filled with water, formed the moat which separated the keep from the mainland. The castle itself is built on the very summit of an isolated crag, and must at one time have been a place of considerable strength, before science reduced to an ignoble level the picturesque advantages of position. Only the battered seaface remains intact; of the rest, a heap of ruin in the courtyard is all that is left. Like ancient Rome, it has served as a quarry to those who took possession when the sixteenth-century earl retreated before the wind and the waves, which in a storm still beat mercilessly against the royal Royal! for as it stands out sombre and ruin. defiant against the evening sky, and casts down a cold shadow upon the humble homes that crouch below, it yet keeps in its desolation a kingly port, and betrays in its ruin no unmeet dejection, Clamber up by the crumbling staircase to the highest turret, and as you look abroad over the peaceful waters, brightened with the white sails of ships bearing to all the corners of the earth the skill and the commerce of Britain—does it not seem like some old-world fable to be told that

from this very spot the warder once kept anxious watch, the beacon cast out its wrathful glare over the troubled waters, and stout men-at-arms gathered together, and looked to the temper of their steel, as dark sails of an uncouth pattern crept stealthily along the horizon, and the evening sea echoed to the hoarse chant of the Norwegian I do not think any of us rightly comrovers? prehend what an entire change has been wrought in all the forms of social, domestic, and political life in every district of this country within a few hundred years, unless sometimes in some out-ofthe-world corner like this, where the past is not so entirely shut out as it is in the factory, the market-place, or the senate.

Lord Macaulay has indeed done good service by grouping together in a striking and picturesque way many of the circumstances that have affected the condition of Englishmen and the character of English life since the great Whig revolution. course, in the more remote districts of Scotland these changes do not present so very romantic a contrast, since we may still detect there many of the features of a rude and illiterate society. within a century and a half the progress that has been made, and the improvements that have been effected, even in the most distant and secluded districts, are sufficiently striking. Some fifty miles to the north-west of the Ithuna (I do not choose to be more specific) lies an island of considerable extent, separated from the mainland by one of those strong and rapid tide-ways, which make the coasts of the North Sea so dangerous

to small craft. In a sheltered valley that runs down from the inland hills to the southern seaboard, the thriving capital of the community is situated. A "kirk" lies on either side of the valley, and the manse belonging to the parson who ministers in that established by law, looks down cheerfully from the hill side upon the village. The Board of Fisheries and the landlord -a rich Manchester cotton-spinner-have built an excellent stone pier, at which a steamer touches three times a week. There is a post-office in the centre of the principal street—right opposite, the parish school, where the children are taught the elements of a sound and Christian education. The deep-sea fishing, which is very productive, farmed by a great English company, and once in ten days a smack arrives to carry the produce to the metropolitan market. The common people are keen, if not rancorous Presbyterians: a few of them make their living by fowling, but the great majority are actively employed in maritime and agricultural pursuits. Besides a set of rising merchants, there are lawyers, doctors, a revenue officer, and a sheriff, whose mansions are placed pleasantly along the sea-coast, in the middle of well-sheltered gardens, which produce in profusion the commoner fruits and the more hardy flowers. The "farm-steadings" throughout the island are neat and commodious, the agricultural operations well understood and conducted, and the farmers themselves thriving, intelligent, and successful. Their sons and daughters "finish" their education in Edinburgh or Aberdeen, and return to the little

community with enlarged notions of men and manners. Nearly the whole arable land has been recently drained by the aid of a grant from Government, and the soil and climate have been thereby greatly improved.

Towards the close of the seventeenth century the island was visited by some adventurous gentlemen, who have left us an account of its condition at that time. It was then, it would seem, little better than an extensive sheep-walk. There was not a tree or shrub upon it from one end to the The fresh-water lakes and marshes by which it was intersected were frequented, indeed, by extraordinary numbers of water-fowl. Regularly in October great flocks of wild swans alighted from the north, and the geese were so numerous that during some seasons they entirely destroyed the scanty crops of bear, in spite of the efforts of the husbandmen. Each inland precipice had its eyrie, and the eagles did considerable damage to the flocks by carrying off the young lambs—a loss which could ill be borne by a people who had hardly two hundred sheep. It was asserted that such prey did not always content them. eyed children rolling about among the summer grasses, had been pounced upon and carried away; and even the wild deer had been scared by the sharp talons and the flapping pinions. Along the coast, great companies of seals and otters might be seen on every sandy beach. When attacked they were often more than a match for the assailants, and after a fierce conflict would effect a triumphant retreat to the sea. Among the rocks

Τ.

immense flocks of sea birds had their nests—the fulmar, the guillemot, the puffin, the rotche, the oyster-catcher, and numerous varieties of the rarer If we may judge from the confused description of a natural historian of the seventeenth century, we are led to conclude that a bird which has entirely disappeared from our waters, and of which no specimen has been obtained in any part of the globe for many years—the great auk—then bred plentifully among the northern bays. "gair-fowl" is described as a bird about the size of a gannet, unable to walk or fly, and whose eggs were nearly as large as those of the ostrich. solan-goose, however, a biped of great sagacity and shrewdness, and then distinguished, it would seem, by a certain facetious ingenuity, was the most abundant, and, as an article of food, the most important to the inhabitants.

The hovels of the natives were built of turf, littered with mud, and not above twenty in all With the exception of one or two, they were clustered together towards the head of the valley in which the present village is situated. them, upon the sheltered hill slope, were a few acres of cultivated ground, on which a coarse kind of barley was raised. The agricultural operations were peculiarly primitive. Soot and sea-ware, indeed, were then, as they still are, employed as manure; but the former was not popular, as it was supposed to infect those who used the grain it grew with the jaundice. The plough was nothing better than a crooked spade, which was worked by the hand; and the harrow consisted of a row of

wooden teeth, to which were attached bunches of rough heath, or long tangles of sea-weed. sickle was unknown, and the agriculturist plucked his scanty harvest from the root, and ground the ears in a hand-mill. The bays swarmed with fish; but as they had only a single boat, what were caught were commonly obtained from the rocks. The different varieties are still known to our fishermen by the names which they bore three hundred years ago, when the community was visited by "Donald Munro, High Dean of the Isles." loes, flukes, sythes, laithes, though a dead tongue to Edinburgh and London epicures, are still familiar words along the northern coast. The want of boats frequently proved a dangerous inconvenience. Once especially, in the spring time, when nearly the whole male population had disembarked on a distant island, the boat broke away, and they were only enabled by a lucky accident to return to their families in the course of the summer, after an absence of three months. Besides the scanty supplies of fish and fodder thus obtained, the principal food consisted of sea-birds, which were caught by climbing to the nests, and setting gins of horsehair along the face of the precipice. thus naturally came to be regarded as the chief test of capacity and address; the most expert climbers were looked upon as heroes, and their exploits and perils celebrated in rude and monotonous verse. The visitors were entertained with incredible accounts of the former, and frightful narratives of the latter. One fowler, when walking along a ledge of rock, incautiously put his foot

into a noose, and stumbling, lost his balance, and fell over the face of the crag. The noose, however, proved strong enough to bear his weight, and unable to regain the ledge from which he had slipt, he hung there for the space of a night, twenty fathoms above the surf, which broke whitely below him. With their dried birds and fish they are boiled sea-weed, which supplied the place of salt and vegetables. Notwithstanding these various means of obtaining food, they were often reduced to great extremities. Some years previously, in a neighbouring island, the whole population had perished of starvation. When the provision-boat, which had been long delayed, arrived with its annual supplies, the crew found a famished woman, with a child at her breast, lying against the quay, and among the hovels the whole population seated in frightful and grotesque attitudes, blue, ghastly, and corrupted, as though they had been dead for weeks.

The people themselves were a simple and primitive race, "naturally grave, and of a fair complexion," says an old writer. Their garments were scanty, made of coarse cloth, and sewed with birds' feathers instead of thread. One of them possessed at this time a steel and tinder-box; the fortunate owner went about with it, and exacted from each family for its use a contribution of three eggs, which was called the *fire-tax*. There was not a single schoolmaster or minister of any denomination among them. Consequently no one could read, and it was impossible to make them understand how certain black lines on paper con-

veyed the thoughts and wishes of the writer. Justice was periodically administered by an agent of M'Leod, "The Lord of the Isles," who exercised in all matters a most despotic authority, and was obeyed with an awe and veneration like that paid to an Eastern potentate. Their knowledge of medicine was meagre and empirical, and there were in consequence among them, though commonly a healthy race, some curious and strange distempers. The ecclesiastical polity impartially assimilated Paganism, Popery, and Presbytery. They turned the faces of their dead towards the east. The principal wells were dedicated to St. Ronan and St. Patrick, and St. Columba's Day was observed as a festival in every household. Among the hills, the visitors frequently detected traces of old heathen rites—Druidical stones the ruins of Pagan temples. Indeed, within twenty years of this time, the natives had been in the habit of sacrificing to a sea-god, whom they named Shony, and the moonlight rites upon the sea-beach, though rude, were not unpicturesque. Their superstitions were, however, for the most part childish, primitive, and harmless-the supernaturalism of an illiterate and unimaginative people. They believed in the pigmies, and "certain human bones and round heads of wonderful little quality," which were sometimes dug up out of old burying-places, gave a colour to the belief that a very diminutive race had once existed among the islands. Second-sight was of course a familiar phenomenon; and amulets were worn as a protection against witchcraft and the evil eye.

They placed great reliance on omens, which seem, like those of the old Romans, to have admitted of considerable latitude in the interpretation; for when a mare, on one occasion, we are told, gave birth to a cloven-footed foal, it was considered by the augurs a bad omen to the owner, "and his death," continues the old writer, gravely, "which happened in a few years after, confirmed them in this opinion."*

These are great changes, doubtless; but in human affairs there seems, as it were, an ocean-like ebb and flow, so that what we gain on the one shore we lose on the other. It is a vain and an ignorant egotism which neglects our earlier history, and concentrates its attention exclusively

^{*} The works to which I have been principally indebted for the above particulars are the following:—Martin's Description of St. Kilda, 1693; Buchan's Description, 1773 (which is for the greater part pilfered from Martin. Buchan was the first parish minister, and might, from his opportunities, have written an interesting book); Description of the Western Isles of Scotland, by Donald Munro, High Dean of the Isles, who travelled through them in 1594; An Account of Hirta and Rona, by Sir George Mackenzie, of Tarbat; Martin's Description of the Western Islands, 1703. The copy of Martin's work, in the library of the Faculty of Advocates at Edinburgh, has the following interesting and characteristic note by Boswell, on the back of the title-page:—

[&]quot;This very book accompanied Dr. Samuel Johnson and me in our tour to the Hebrides, in autumn 1773. Mr. Johnson told me that he had read Martin when very young. Martin was a native of the Isle of Skye, where a number of his relations still remain. His book is a very imperfect performance; and he is erroneous as to many particulars, even some concerning his own island. Yet as it is the only book upon the subject, it is very generally known. I have seen a second edition of it. I cannot but have a kindness for him, notwithstanding his defects.

James Boswell."

[&]quot;16 April 1774."

upon the three or four centuries that lie nearest to our own. Agamemnon was not the first king in Argos; and there were great men in Scotland before Robert Bruce. The antiquarian who chooses to examine the domestic annals of his country during the three hundred years which preceded the breaking out of the English wars, will become acquainted with an age not altogether unmemorable; since it was the age when Scotland was happier and freer, more peaceful and more prosperous, than at any subsequent period up to the union of the Crowns.*

Horace was an Italian, and so he sang of the spring; had he lived in Scotland, he would have crowned the Autumn after his fashion—with lilies and rosebuds, and clusters of purple grapes, mellow as its sunshine. Cockneys, indeed, would

* Winton looks back regretfully to the Golden Age — which in Scotland means the reign of Macbeth:—

"All hys tyme wes gret plente Aboundand, baith on land and se. He wes in justice rycht lawchful, And til hys legis all awful."

The death of Alexander III., which a contemporary minstrel thus laments:

"Quhen Alysandyr oure Kynge wes dede,
That Scotland led in lawe and le,
Away wes sons of ale and brede,
Of wyne and wax, of gamyn and gle,
Our gold wes changyd into led," etc.

is a fatal landmark in the social history of Scotland. It does credit to the discernment of Thomas the Rhymer (whether his prophecy was uttered before or after the event) to have foreseen the "calamity and misery" which it was to cause—"a blast so vehement that it shall exceed all those which have yet been heard in Scotland." have come in his way—where would they not? but the well-regulated mind acquiesces in the unexplained details of the economy of Providence. is no doubt a perplexing fact that one half of our countrymen should wander annually over half the globe without deriving a single genuine enjoyable impression from anything during the whole course of their travel: but the naturalist does not harden his heart with the knotty points of metaphysics. Indeed, he is for the most part, with certain little infirmities of his own, a kindly and good-hearted man: quarrels with none, unless with those who, in their ignorance and cruelty, wantonly mar the good world that God has made: nay, even at times believes, perhaps, that his cockney brother, did inadvertently receive some devout impression which still serves to penetrate with unwonted sweetness the meanness of his daily life. It is difficult—a man must be uncommonly perverse to remain a bigot or a sectary in the presence of the works of God. They at least inculcate that divine lesson of charity which the churches have forgot to teach.

> The children sport upon the shore, The mighty waters roll for evermore:

and he who with a pathos too bitter for tears discovers that even to himself "a glory has departed from the earth," which the returning summer does not bring back, will not think very hardly of any, the most thick-headed of his brethren.

The romance of the moor has been recently disturbed, and even the Gor-cock has begun to

lose the old racy heatheriness. Still there are many sequestered districts among the more remote Highlands, to which the tourist and the artist do not penetrate; and as the English sportsman, after "his three weeks' pleasure in the Scottish woods," is commonly across the Border by the beginning of October, a Northern naturalist may enjoy his hill-side without disturbance during the finest weather in the world. And the truth is, that for grouse-shooting, October and November are the best months of the year. In August the birds sit like chickens, and in September they are as wild as geese. But about the first or second week in October the packs break up into small detachments, and any pleasant morning after a hard black frost (for a white or hoar frost has a contrary effect), they will sit well within easy range of a cartridge. The cocks, moreover, are in splendid condition by this time-very different in their ample folds of imperial purple from the illfed, ill-fledged, ill-favoured victims of the twelfth.

How delicious, moreover, are the bays and coves along the coast in the early autumn! The crisp sea-sand—the crimson sea-weeds—the beaten sward, with its hardy flowers—the fields of yellow oats hanging precipitously along the brae-sides, which picturesque-looking bandits are reaping as their fathers have reaped them since the days of Hengist. The tarrock skims lightly along, and screams as the skua comes prowling round the cape—high up, the gannet watches its prey, and arresting itself in mid-flight, dives with prodigious force, straight as an arrow, a hundred yards below

the surface—the terns, like dappled downs, are blown about the sky, or, balanced upon the breakers, weave their wings swiftly together. A gay and animated picture in the flush of the October sunlight—a light which mingles in its rich and saddened tones the autumnal beauty and the autumnal decay.

This, for example, has been one of those delicious days whose charm is none the less exquisite because there are no words fit to arrest and perpetuate its peculiar loveliness. Hour after hour the waves broke upon the sandy beach with the same monotonous roll, though a perceptible change might be detected by the practised ear as the tide retreated from the land and again returned. The boat of a solitary fisherman, and a lustrously white bird—a gannet, or one of the larger gulls—lay the whole morning together near the centre of the bay. About noon, a large ship, with every inch of canvas spread, dropt lazily along to the south. As the day waned, and the tide ebbed, the gull and the fisher left their positions; small flocks of ducks beat in quickly towards the shore in single file; and once a pair of red-throated divers, in their petulant, coquettish way, chased each other around the margin of the bay. High up upon the downs the lights began to twinkle—a red, lurid glow shewed where the village blacksmith plied his craft—voices muffled by the twilight came down upon the shore—and a wary heron flapped its unwieldy wings as it passed along to the pool where, until the gray of the morning, it will watch And now, while the roar of the retreating tide.

the restless ocean rises up to them for ever, silently one by one, the stars come out above the hills.

Boating is the favourite amusement on the Scotch coast during the summer and autumn, and the fine breezy days of September are specially fitted for its enjoyment. Later in the year the weather becomes stormy and uncertain, and earlier there are usually two or three hours of perfect calm during the best part of the day. Apart from the chance of a capsize—a chance which lends to the pursuit a pleasing excitement of its own, and which is not to be altogether overlooked among the Orcadian squalls—it is a glorious amusement; no fitter culture could English youth obtain to make them skilful workers and intrepid men, such as Englishmen always have been, and we may hope still are—perhaps from this immemorial fellowship with the sea. A light little craft is the Lily, lithe and slim as the Highland Lady Flora to whom she is dedicated, with white downy sheets and long, raking, roguish-looking masts; so that when afloat, with her dense spray of canvas dashed by the sunshine or mantled by the breeze, she looks not unlike a long-winged hooper bearing down swiftly from the Iberian A single fisher-boy with us to look to the frosts. foresail—for the beautiful innocent is schoonerrigged—the tiller in one hand, and the sheet of the mainsail loosely fastened on the lee-side, the Lily leaps lightly from cover, and unchecked by injudicious endeavours to keep her within a point of the wind, or to achieve any other impracticable experiment, for the darling is tender

in the mouth, and is restive if not gently handled, But now she is settled to her work, and at first. with the bit between her teeth, and every muscle tight and straight, like Paganini's bow-string, she scuds away as though the "warlock of the rosy west" were on her wake! Then for a while she lingers and hesitates, and sways to and fro, languidly, in very wantonness—light and buoyant as a bubble upon the waves. But again the passion is upon her; brushing the foam behind her, she strikes her keel low and deep into the hissing water, and rushes right out upon the beaten sea, as the English chargers swept upon the Russian Smooth to-day is the rough German Ocean as that tideless main across which "the snow-limbed Aphrodite" came smiling to her Paphian shrine; but the canvas is taut, and the water not an inch below the gun-wale, and sometimes a dash of spray breaks across the bow into our faces, for there is a stiff land breeze on the weather quarter, just enough to make us think of a reef should it freshen out of those white colossal clouds that are clambering across the hills. Frankly, is there not a delicious charm in the clear sea, the morning light, the watery wind, and an exultant sense of liberty, which beats the Red Republic, with its musty common-places, out of the field, as the frail boat, sustained by your own right hand, speeds away swiftly from the habitations of men, and the land behind you lessens and lessens till the sand-hills sink out of sight, and the water grows and grows till its blue line cuts the So much so, that if a man had always

such a pathway open to him to the free sea and the unfettered heaven, almost any excess of political tyranny—a Neapolitan despotism, a Russian serfdom—might be borne without despair. Lovelace may be right:—

Stone walls do not a prison make,
Nor iron bars a cage;
Minds innocent and quiet take
That for an hermitage;

If I have freedom in my love, And in my soul am free, Angels alone that soar above, Enjoy such liberty,—*

yet we prefer the freedom of the sea.

* Why is Lovelace's "Lucasta" excluded from every edition of the English poets? There are fewer of the faults of the age—conceit, coxcombry, affected and violent prettiness—in his poetry than in that of any of his contemporaries; and his smaller pieces especially are characterized by sweetness, grace, and natural simplicity. What can be more exquisite than these lines to Lucasta, entitled "The Rose"—lines as sweetly and richly-coloured as the rose-lyric in "Maud"?—

THE ROSE.

Sweet, serene, sky-like flower,
Haste to adorn her bower;
From thy long cloudy bed,
Shoot forth thy damask head.

The startled blush of Flora!
The grief of pale Aurora,
Who will contest no more;
Haste, haste, to strew her floor.

Vermilion ball that's given
From lip to lip in heaven;
Love's couches coverlid;
Haste, haste, to make her bed.

But it is time to house the Lily. The harvest fields are bare. Spring, summer, autumn are gone. The purple light dies out of the west, and the shadows gather bleakly round the desolate sea. Huge white clouds rear their giant battlements along the horizon, charged with sleet and snow from Norwegian waters, which when we wake to-morrow will have whitened the country far and

Dear offspring of pleas'd Venus, And jolly, plump Silenus; Haste, haste, to deck the hair Of th' only sweetly fair.

See! rosy is her bower;
Her floor is all this flower:
Her bed a rosy nest
By a bed of roses press'd.

But early as she dresses
Why fly you her bright tresses?
Ah! I have found, I fear;
Because her cheeks are near.

Very musical, too, are the lines in which the poet conveys to Amarantha his behest, "that she would dishevel her hair."

Amarantha, sweet and fair,
Ah! braid no more that shining hair!
As my curious hand or eye
Hovering round thee let it fly.

Let it fly as unconfined •
As its calm ravisher, the wind;
Who hath left his darling east
To wanton o'er that spicy nest.

Every tress must be confest; But neatly tangled at the best: Like a clue of golden thread Most excellently ravelled.

"Lucasta" and the posthumous poems were published at the Chiswick Press in 1817; but a limited number of copies only were printed, and the two small volumes are now extremely scarce.

wide, and stilled the tumult in all your cities. The winter is upon us.

Winter! Such a winter as the oldest inhabitant remembers not, and recalling those terrible winters of 1709 and 1740, when, as we are told, the cold was so intense that "in France the sentinels died at their posts, the birds dropt down dead out of the air, and the whole East Sea was frozen over, so that people journeyed from Copenhagen to Dantzick upon the ice." The treasures of the hail and the snow have been poured out. The drift is several feet deep, and lies in great mounds along the sides of the black hawthorn hedges. The meers and ponds are hard and rugged like granite; the fresh water wild fowl pass the day upon the open sea, and come up at night to the springs that still force their way through the coarse sedge of the inland marshes. Yesterday morning the shallow pools of salt water upon the sands were coated over with a thin film of ice, as if the sea itself could not withstand the rigorous cold any longer. The cottages of the fisher people on the other side of the bay are wrapped in white mantillas; the square doors and windows looking intensely black and angular; and, stayed by the frost, the blue smoke wanders fitfully along the brae side, vainly attempting to escape. It has ceased snowing now for some days, but nothing could be more imposing than the advance of the storm clouds in the early part of the week, as they followed each other from the grim north in ordered march, like white

pillars of sand moving across the desert. The snow has been arrested in all manner of fantastic patterns, and on the gray bents that run parallel with the beach, it is covered with sharp and delicate imprints, each muscle as keen and articulate as though it had been cunningly cut in alabaster. What various idiosyncracies these vagrant imprints reveal! There is the capricious limp of the rabbit, and the fastidious tramp of the roe-deer, who picks her way like a dainty aristocrat, as she is; intricate figures which whole thickets of partridges have traced on the leeside of a snow-wreath; the webbed foot of the wild goose, like the picture of a bat with expanded wings; the long toes, and the lounging gait of the woodcock; and the fairylike prints of the sparrow, the robin, and the wren. One might compose an account of the natural history of the hare, for instance, from the trail she has left in this one field, following her step by step from the time when she limped leisurely through the break in the hedge—she would not leap the wall for the world—to the spot where, having nibbled with her keen sharp teeth a little way further into the sweet turnip which she has scraped clear of the frozen mud, she washes her face, and curls her whiskers with her smooth downy paws, and then cosily nestles into her warm nest Such simple histories are beneath the snow. written in most legible characters by every hedgerow and brook side. A sombre and frigid season it is, no doubt, but yet most precious to the naturalist and the sportsman, aye, and to all healthy and active mortals.

Cold's the wind, and wet's the rain,
Saint Hugh be our good speede;
Ill is the weather that bringeth no gain,
Nor helps good hearts in neede.*

And indeed no weather can compare with that of a thoroughly fine winter morning. Liquid and transparent as Claude's or Turner's is the air, the sky lightly coated with flakes of mottled foam, through which we gain illimitable glimpses into the blue ether beyond. The branches of the trees are traced out line by line against the cold horizon, and the round hectic, consumptive-looking sun. The grass is stiff and brittle, and covered with minute diamonds of white frost, which sparkle keenly in the winter light; the sea still and transparent, and stretching away ever so far till it joins the Norwegian tide. How distinctly one hears the refrain of the burn, as it sings merrily to itself in the grave stillness of January! The sheep, as if possessed by the peripatetic devils who destroyed the swine in the New Testament, are rushing boisterously across the lawn in great force; the sparrows cluster about the leafless hedges, and chirp defiantly in the cold; and a cock, whose youth has been passed in the Celestial Empire, treats his family circle to a series of rapid and somewhat hysterical congratulations. Cold it is, no doubt, as every creature testifies; but it is the cold that strengthens and exhilarates when braved manfully by the courageous naturalist or the honest sportsman.

^{*} The above lines are from *The Shoemaker's Holiday*, by Thomas Decker. (Shakspeare Society's Papers, vol. ii.)

'3. T

Our little duck craft, the Daisy, is lying at anchor near the pier; and John and Peter (we keep a good old Apostolic nomenclature here) have made everything snug for a breeze, should it freshen before our return from the Ithuna, to which this winter morning we are bound for ducks. Guns, cartridges, cigars, sandwiches, usquebaugh —all are snugly deposited in the Daisy's lockers; and the moment we go on board she is pushed off from the wooden pier. There is a capful of wind from the west, just enough to fill our morsel of a sail; for the Daisy is too light and dainty a craft to stand above half-a-dozen square yards or so of canvas. John, with an antique musket under his arm that saw service in the '45, I dare say, steers the boat; Peter takes charge of the sail; and seated in the bow, armed with a plain, hard-hitting, double-barrelled duck gun, and wrapped in a huge brown bearskin coat, through which neither wind nor frost can penetrate, we wait, like Mr. Micawber, for "something to turn up." Bowling along to the north, a common gull comes sometimes screaming towards us, pursued by the Tammy Alan, as they call him here—the audacious and formidable falcon of the sea. The skua is perhaps the boldest bird alive; it often comes within a few yards of the fisherman: I saw one once snatch a morsel of cod-liver from the blade of an oar held in the hand, and resting on the Though unwilling to check our way, the temptation at length becomes too strong; and a Tammy who has been staring at us overhead for the last five minutes, falls right against the inside

of the sheet, his wing broken, but his dangerous claws unharmed, and his spirit still eager for Among the breakers, as we round the point, a flock of scoters are diving incessantly: but no boat could live within shot; so casting a wistful look upon them in passing, we run rapidly for a mile or two close to the coast, towards the bight in the shore, where, in its noble bay, the Ithuna meets the sea. A noble bay, indeed hemmed in on all sides by huge sandhills, and paved with sand to the centre—as even a landsman may tell by the delicious green of its shallow water, so different from the sullen blue of the ocean over rocks or tangle. This is the favourite feeding ground of all the ducks and divers on the coast; and it is, when we arrive, dotted over with little parties of these birds, whose shrill clamour is distinctly audible through the frosty air long before we enter. Reefing the sail, to make it as undistinguishable as possible—and in a fresh breeze, like that now rippling the water, the Daisy scarcely needs sail at all—we steal quietly on the nearest group. Before they observe the boat it is within forty yards, and as they rise against the wind—and ducks always do rise into the wind, not being able to fly, apparently, until their wings meet with some resistance—we get a first-rate shot, and bring down four of the flock. The others beat quickly out to sea, but they will not go far, for they are daring little fellows, and the most restless and volatile of birds. the dead, they prove to be northern harelds—one dingy duck, a young male, and two splendid old

drakes, with their long, drooping tails in great perfection, and across the knightly buff the Maltese cross woven in virgin white! Fill their wounds with cotton to keep the feathers uninjured, and then lay them aside as quick as may be, for there, paddling in towards the Cove, with its limpetcovered pier and sharp, shingly bottom, are a pair of bordiwings. Keep them between the boat and the land, and we are sure of a shot. You must rise, you precious beauties—there is no help for it; and hardly are they out of the water before the foremost falls. The other hesitates a moment, but the love of life and the fear of man are too strong for it; and striking rapidly out to sea, it leaves its red-throated mate struggling madly with the water, to sob out its heart-blood alone. fated fair one! But the good sportsman never moralizes; he believes instinctively in man's divine right to destroy; and somehow he is not less brave, or generous, or tender-hearted for that matter, than the most rigid and pitiless vegetarian.

Luncheon is a great institution especially at sea. The sandwich, with its delicate aroma of chutney; the thimbleful of pure usquebagh; the friendly chat over the white fragrant ashes of the cheroot!

"John, did you ever see the great auk in these parts?" And I shew the tough old veteran who is making a desperate onslaught on a Buchan sargent, the account of the bird in "Yarrell."

John—let me say in passing—is the hero of almost every drama of fisher life, and the perilous feats which he has accomplished are frankly

acknowledged to be unrivalled. He has taken the eggs of the "Tamie Norrie" from a rock where mortal man never trod since the rock was made; he has been in the grasp of a "brownie," and only saved his life by stabbing the brute with his knife to the heart; he has floated by himself on a single spar in the broad Atlantic for days. And his supremacy is the more readily admitted since he never lays any claim to regal authority, nor appears in any way conscious of his admitted superiority. Than this black-eyed, black-bearded, sinewy Scotch smuggler, a more brave, honest, unaffected, and genuine "hero" is not to be found in Mr. Carlyle's collection.

"No sir, not exactly here away; but I mind when I gaed to the sealghs, thirty years bygane, we aye met a pair aff the Sheetland shore. A muckle bird, wi' a great neb like a marrot—a neb, ye may tak my word, that could bite. Its wings were unca sma'; it flew nae mair than I did; but it gae'd through the water like a shot. Never a leam could come near the auld rotche, as the Sheetland bodies ca'ed him. But now for lang nane ha'e been seen onywhere I ken o', and the folk say they are a' dead and gane."

True enough, John. He has withdrawn himself from public life at least—an example that might be profitably followed by certain public functionaries we wist of. Helpless on the land, unable to fly, his only element being the water, he formed a kind of link between the nineteenth century and the obsolete monsters of the past. Considering his nondescript position, he no doubt felt somewhat

uncomfortable in the current economy, and prudently withdrew. Science tells us of decayed races who served the purposes for which they were created, and shews us their bones among the strata of the antique world. But it is even more curious to light upon a race that has died out, as we may say among our feet, and before our eyes.

Having secured a golden-eyed garrot, which we marked out of a flock of harelds, a brace of widgeon, an eider, and another long-tailed duck, we make sail for home. Beating quietly up, we are startled by a strange mocking, unearthly laugh, rising from the limpid water by the boat, as if "a spirit of the vasty deep" were chuckling pleasantly over some impending catastrophe. What, in the name of bad luck, can it mean? By the shade of Odin! no other than the great northern diver himself—a three-year-old loon, as John understands at a glance. Hardly a moment to aim—off, almost at random, go all the barrels in the boat, and after an ineffectual attempt to plunge below, and one convulsive effort to shake off the sickness that blinds him, the noble monarch of the Arctic main lies motionless on the water. This is great luck, indeed; you may chase these divers for hours without getting even the chance of a shot, and what you do shoot are commonly young birds who have not obtained their perfect plumage. But we must not linger longer; the sun is already far down among the hills; an ugly cloud gathers along the eastern horizon, and a heavy groundswell begins to shake the little Daisy in a way that she does not altogether like. There is a

beautiful breeze, however, right across the weatherquarter, just enough to dip the gunwale now and then below the ripple; and in half-an-hour, after a swift, rushing run, and as the first star of the winter night brightens beside the winter moon, we are on terra firma with our spoil: one northern and one red-throated diver, one eider, one goldeneye, a skua, a brace of widgeon, and five long-tailed ducks—not a bad day's work, upon the whole.

It is all very well for a cockney to boast of his sixty brace of grouse or partridges per diem; the sixth commandment was not probably meant to apply to the moors; at least, in such a case the law could hardly be expected to interpose its authority. But though the blood of his victims may not lie heavy upon his seared and obdurate conscience, the begrimed murderer should consider that it is quite possible to combine sport with recreation; and when he issues from that reeking atmosphere of blood and smoke which has stained all day the blue heaven and the fresh breezes of the mountain, will he pretend to say that he has obtained the least compensation? It is out of the question; the incessant discharges have blinded his eyes, and deafened his ears, and deprived him of any slight claim to intelligence which he might have made in the morning. He is now more fit for a lunatic asylum than for any other Christian institution. Nihil tetigit, quod non ornavit; and the gray hill-side, with its purple heather, and mystery of clouds and rain, has been debased and degraded into a mechanical slaughter-house. Such a bag as we have made to-day is, on the contrary,

the delight of the genuine and abstemious sportsman—using but not abusing, and valuing the rarity and variety more than the mere market quantity of his game. And indeed its contents are worth looking at.

John has laid them out carefully on the shingle—not without a certain picturesqueness in the arrangement, for John is a man of taste, and knows something of practical æsthetics. loon occupies the centre, like the large redcheeked peach in the confectioner's basket of wall-The speckled diver, fit mate for an emperor, lies by his side; and the others form a circle round about, their tails turned upon the outside world. There is not much colour among them, indeed—that has been nipped in the bud by the frost; but in contrast with the grey beach, they look bright enough. There are blood-red feathers round the neck of the Colymbus septentrionalis, just as if a patch of crimson plaster had been stuck on her throat to keep out the cold. The Harelda glacialis has a pair of chocolatebrown ruffles, shaded with orange, tied over his In the rich luminous black on the breast of the Somateria molassima there are visible, when the sun shines on it, half the colours in the rainbow at least; you cannot then tell whether the bird is purple or crimson, or green or gold. A few of them, moreover, have brilliant legs and ankles light green and tawny orange being the prevailing A pretty mixture of blue and crimson in narrow stripes is also popular, and has probably supplied the pattern for that bewitching and perplexing petticoat which, by a perfectly constitutional fiction, Kate professes to wear under her winter silk.

I take, I own, immense interest in these Arctic sea-fowl. We are told by physiologists, indeed, that they all belong to the lowest order of birds, and it is quite true that they are not distinguished by the brilliant colours of the Tropics, where life, these gentlemen say, attains its highest develop-The psychologist, however, may excused if he hold a different opinion. animals who have to contend with the iceberg and the snow-drift, display undoubtedly much more individual character, and energetic resource than those whose necessities are supplied by the lavish The plumage of the northern fauna is certainly sombre and uniform enough; still, it is governed by perfect taste, and exhibits the most simple and graceful combinations; and the difference, after all—for the law is alike throughout the whole animal and spiritual kingdom—is exactly that which separates the gaudy and meretricious imagination of the tropics from the abstemious intellect of the North.

In another way these migratory birds possess a peculiar interest and attraction. They are, as it were, the only living link between our own and that desolate empire where even English enterprise cannot follow them. They come to us from the bleak and sombre North, and bleakly behind them rises the northern winter! What more striking vision could we obtain of the solitude of that Arctic darkness which drives these hardy

wanderers from their native wilderness into the hated and perilous vicinity of man? And then the wild strangeness of the scenes into which they penetrate—mountains of ice that reel together in perilous madness—silent seas whose statuesque serenity the tempest cannot ruffle—the angry flush of the Aurora upon the night! You will no doubt consider it very fanciful and extravagant, but somehow every hooper or loon I shoot awakens in my mind a curious reminiscence of the Scandinavian Walhalla.

Ay, and if we follow out their history through its detail, what a picturesque romance. During the winter months, a pair of northern voyagers have sojourned in the bay. As sure as the breakfast-bell, there were the active little fellows, fishing, as if for dear life, right under the terrace. berth of it they must have had on the water all night, one would think; but in the morning they are as lively and vivacious as though they had slept on down pillows. They made their appearance about the end of the year, fresh from their northern fastnesses, quite guileless in the ways of men; and it is really a marvel to me how they have contrived to escape the cunning toils that were laid for them. Since then, by getting into all manner of scrapes, they have gained ever-somuch practical experience of English life. length from the sweet South are breathed the maiden whispers of the spring, and the divers break up their camp, and follow the beaten winter to the North. Past the Orknies, where they pick up certain of their connexions who have

wintered in the Voes, and cultivate a cursory acquaintance with a colony of Mother Carey's chickens who breed on the mainland there; past the rocks of the Norwegian fiords, and the camps of stately eiders, who look out, in their lazy, dignified, aristocratic way, at the swift voyagers as they go by; past perhaps that unvisited rock in the middle of the wide Atlantic to which it is said the great auk has gloomily retreated—past all these to a bleak kingdom where the Czar's sceptre does not reach. The wide desolate plain, when they arrive, is already teeming with life. After a little dexterous manœuvring, our winter friends appropriate an unoccupied station on the rushy margin of one of the sea-belts that cut up the land there into a perfect labyrinth of fantastic islands. Close to them on one side, is the nest of a pair of the Clangula histrionica—the most ornately and elaborately "got up" of the Arctic ducks; on the other, they are flanked by a colony of hoopers, whose society, however, they do not much relish, as the swan is inclined to be quarrelsome with his neighbours—his shrill trumpeting, moreover, being rather disturbing at night. Forthwith they commence building operations, and construct a habitation with expedition; for it does not take long to gather a few dried reeds into a heap by the water-side, and there is none of the delicate architecture or loving preparation which makes the soft cradle of southern birds a marvel among men. But when, after long waiting, from out of the coarse sedge a little downy morsel drops into the water,

do not suppose that the loon feels less genuine tenderness for her offspring, though she may not make such a fuss about it as your domestic poultry. For some weeks the bays and lochs absolutely swarm with young birds-mottled divers, round yellow goslings, pale delicate cygnets, dingy ducklings, and guillemots, and marrots, innumerable. With each small mouth clamorous for food, the parents, we may be sure, have little spare time on their hands. But the youngsters are quickly able to shift for themselves, and then, warned by an unfailing instinct of the approach of winter, the whole colony moves off, family by family, for the South. By the beginning of September the breeding-place is silent and deserted, and the half-dozen unhappy Esquimaux who live permanently in the district are left alone to get through the winter in their seal-skin coats as they best may.* .

^{*} Two of the divers, the red-throated and the great northern (Colymbus septentrionalis and Colymbus glacialis), are, or at least were within the last few years, very numerous on our sea coasts; and Mr. St. John mentions that a few pairs of the black-throated (Colymbus arcticus) breed among the high-lying lochs in Sutherland. loon and the bordiwing, as the former are called here, generally arrive during October, and remain till the following April. Two years ago I noticed a loon in the bay about the beginning of Junea wounded bird, probably, as it does not breed anywhere on the coast. Bordiwings are sometimes met with until the end of May; they are then, in flocks of twenty or thirty, and invariably on the wing, flying towards the North. It is nearly impossible to induce the loon to quit the water—unlike the bordiwing, who, if pursued, rises immediately—though, notwithstanding its small wings, it flies easily and with great rapidity. I have never seen it ashore. From the peculiar position of its legs it no doubt moves awkwardly enough on terra firms. The legs, however, are admirably adapted for the water,

Of all these sea-fowl—not even excepting the great wild swan—the loon is the most beautiful and powerful. The Arctic diver is the eagle of

joined as they are to the very end of the body, and constructed so as to enable it, as seamen say, "to feather the oar"—the side which cuts the water on the return stroke being thin and sharp as a knife. bordiwing occasionally alights on a rock at a short distance from the beach, where it sits perpendicularly erect, like a guillemot or a razorbill. There used to be an odd notion current—derived no doubt from the peculiarity of their structure—that these birds could not guit the water. Pontoppidan, for instance, asserts that the imber-diver, as he calls the loon, never lands except during the week before Christmas, "whence the fourth Sunday in Advent is called by the people Imber Sunday;" and the process of incubation which he is forced to provide for a bird so exclusively attached to the water is extremely characteristic. "Under their wings in their body there are two pretty deep holes, big enough to put one's fist in; in each of these they hide an egg, and hatch the young ones as perfect, and with less trouble, than others do on shore."

There has been a great controversy among naturalists as to the way in which the loon dives. Dunn, in his account of Shetland, says, "Sinking gradually under the surface, without throwing itself forward, the head is the last part that disappears." Other writers have asserted that it dives like water-birds in general. From my own observation I believe that there is some truth in both views—the whole truth, as in most other cases, lying between the extremes. When searching for food, the head of the diver is certainly the first to disappear. At other times—and you may easily satisfy yourself of this by watching one any winter day, when it has finished its afternoon meal—it dives in the fashion that Dunn describes. The cormorant and the ducks before they can gain the impetus necessary to effect a descent, require to raise their bodies partly out of the water. loon, on the contrary, makes no exertion, but disappears silently and noiselessly—as if it were grasped by some invisible hand, and pulled No other water-fowl can dive with the same ease; and the fact strikingly illustrates the great strength of these birds. The flesh of this diver is, as might be supposed, extremely tough and illflavoured; and even the fishers, who are not very fastidious, do not attempt to use it. Audubon, however, mentions that he had seen the mountain Indians in Labrador eat it with relish.

the ocean. A most intrepid mariner, it is yet the most wary and vigilant of birds. Even on the open sea, and though there should not be a boat in sight, it is perpetually on the alert. The moment it rises after a dive, and before it commences to discuss the prey it has secured, it glances suspiciously round and round before and behind in every direction. When it desires to remain unseen, it can swim wonderfully low-its back entirely submerged, its neck stretched forward horizontally, and resting as it were on the waves. The best time, however, to estimate its skill and hardihood is during the course of an easterly gale. Not a boat or living being is visible far or near on the sea—even the gulls have been blown away by the blast, and scattered among the inland marshes. One intrepid sailor, however, has not been scared. Take your glass, and watch the wary mariner as he beats out bravely in the teeth of the wind. How superbly he breasts the How buoyantly he scatters the foam that gathers thick about his neck! How he exults in the fierce pressure of the waves! Through the white surf of the breakers the undaunted diver — the only creature there into whom God has breathed the breath of life—holds on his perilous path, and makes his way across the forlorn and tumultuous waste in spite of wind and wave.

I have told you of our winter shooting by day, but to the lover of wild fowl the night is not to be neglected. For night-shooting, the best spot I know is a low sand-bank near the mouth of the bay, running for some distance into the sea, and

separating it from a large fresh-water lake which seldom freezes; such a place as that to which the wounded Arthur was borne in his rent armour:—

a dark strait of barren land On one side lay the ocean, and on one Lay a great water, and the moon was full.

It is not merely the excitement of sport that makes night work so fascinating to those who engage in it; but all the accessories are striking and impressive. The round winter moon keeps along the eastern sky the even tenor of her way, and in her light the white night-gear of the earth looks dim and spectral—especially when contrasted with the troubled blackness of the water. The dash of the waves against the sand is stayed into a low murmur by the gripe of the frost; the measured beat of the wild duck's wings is heard with wonderful distinctness as they fly to and fro in the flood of moonlight overhead; from the bay there arises a confused Babel of cries, among which the sportsman hears at times—hears with a beating heart—as he retreats from or approaches the shore, the shrill trumpet-like call of the wild swan. Such winter nights are never forgotten, though as years pass in this world one contrives somehow to forget much. And then, after midnight, when the moon is on the wane, and "a breeze of morning moves," he returns, with a golden-eye and a brace of mallard in the pockets of his shooting-coat, to the red fire that smoulders on the kitchen hearth—before which Jack, his shaggy retriever, shakes himself out for a snooze —and the profound and fragrant bowl of Anatolian Latakia.

Pleasant, very pleasant, too, are those winter evenings, when the wind whistles keenly high up in the chimney, and the fire sparkles bravely on the red drapery that shuts out the night. You sit before the wide antique grate, and fashion all manner of fantastic imaginations and quaint romance between the glowing bars. How the past comes back upon you! A noble gentleman, indeed, the sole survivor of the Homeric dynasty of the gods, with eagle eye, and Jove-like curls, and

lips intense,
With garrulous god-innocence;

and the rich voice of "the old man eloquent" rings once again pleasantly in your ears. Very fair, in sooth, was the lady—the fair Ivy of your "kingdom by the sea"—all too fair in her delicate maidenhood for any shore save that to which the angels took her. Do you start as though it were in very truth the remembered sweep of those Cashmere folds you heard again? Tush! 'tis but the wind outside among the drenched leaves of the ivy. And from the reverie of a youth that has escaped, you scarce know how, you are wakened by the monotonous sound of voices in the hall below, where the ancient forester is narrating to a faithful audience some legend

Of old unhappy far-off things, And battles long ago.

Such is our seaboard. We have, of course, other topics to interest us besides those of which

I have written. A new book comes to us at times,—an idyll by Tennyson, a sermon by Robertson or Maurice, a romance like Elsie Venner or Silas Marner, a bit of history by Froude, or Motley, or Tulloch. And then we have—life. Our sky is gray; but the life that is transacted beneath it,—truly there is enough of light and shadow there to satisfy Salvator Rosa.

I have often wondered why, in a world like this, where there are victories and defeats, and tragic issues of all sorts continually on the cards, our modern poets should be unable to discover material of the right quality with which to work. And yet it lies at their doors, as at ours. The hearts of obscure cottars and fishers by the wintry sea, are 'big' with the pain of Ophelia and the passion of Lear. We all know, we have all seen, that this is true.

Only yesterday, for instance, an inquiry took place here as to the death of a man who had poisoned It came out in evidence that he had been himself. actively employed as a gamekeeper till the previous summer, when he was attacked with disease of the hip-joint, which incapacitated him for work. had borne his affliction for a time pretty well; but the strong man grew weary of this sick life; and on the previous day, when his wife was in the byre milking the cows, he had quietly taken a dose of strychnine. I have seldom heard anything more moving than his wife's narrative. She was yet a young woman; they had been married only a few years; their eldest child was not more than six or seven. "He had been sair down-hearted," she said, "sin spring-time. He thought the doctor's stuff

was na doing him good. Sometimes he was better, -sometimes he was waur. Ae day he said to me quite serious that he thought he was going mad; he felt sometimes as if he could bite—just like a mad dog. I said till him, 'O Jamie, man' (here she bursts into tears, and the words came out between the sobs), 'but you wouldna' bite me?' and he said, 'No, Mary, I wouldna touch you.' When I came in yestreen," she continued, "he was turning about on the bench, where he used to lie, and he says to me, 'Mary, I've tried a rash cure. I've ta'en poison.' I ran up till him, and put my arms round his head, and says till him, 'O Jamie, what gar'd you do that?' 'Mary,' says he (here she burst into another violent fit of sobbing), 'Mary, I was weary o' my life. I could wark nane for mysel, and I was just hinderin' you." Poor soul! How little he knew her. She would have worked on till doomsday, till her feet were weary, till her eyes were dim, joyfully, with all her heart, if he would only have believed it. But he didn't; and so, with a mixture of selfishness and unselfishness, the poor wretch put himself out of the way.

Let me tell you another. A woman died suddenly last week in the upper part of the parish, and an official investigation in such cases now takes place in Scotland. It was a lovely autumn evening when we arrived, after making our way along roads which I trust, for the sake of human comfort, are found only in this part of the world. A wild out-of-the-way place it appeared, lying on the verge of the cultivated country, along low

purple moors, where we heard the crow of the gorcock, and with a glimpse on the other side, over sand-hills and furzy bents, of the bright blue sealine. The cottage was a miserable hovel with a couple of rooms—a but and a ben, as they say with us—and the father and mother of the dead woman, staid homely-looking people who had seen some sixty or seventy years of this forlorn life, "Is't for the papers?" the met us at the door. old man asked us when we told him we had come to see his daughter. He had heard of the newspapers even up there; so we had to explain to him that we were not reporters. They took us into a kind of out-house or shed where the body The girl, she looked five or seven and twenty, had been ill since Martinmas, "just wasting away," her mother told us; and the previous day, after complaining of a pain in her left side and arm, she fell down suddenly, and was stone dead in five minutes. It was spasm of the heart, angina pectoris, the surgeon said at once. When they were writing down the depositions by the light of the fast fading twilight outside, I went into the kitchen. A lad, six or seven years old, was sitting on a stool beside the hearth, sobbing and moaning over the peat-fire on the floor. was a long time before I could get the little fellow to speak; but it came out at last—the old people had said their daughter was not married—that he "was greeting for his mither"—the unwedded wife who lay dead and cold in the next room. misery, and heart-breaking, and years of suffering even a mud-hovel can cover, you see. Surely if

such things can happen in this desolate part of God's world, and be seen of men, there must be many more worthy of note, most worthy of song, in those great cities where you live. Why is it that our poets will not give us a glimpse of the real heart-break sometimes in their poetry?

Alack! alack! Lancelot. The roving gipsy life has well-nigh come to an end. Already it begins to grow dim and faint—very faint indeed. Is the Past, when it is past, one whit more substantial than the stuff of which dreams are made?

But before the Past is cut away, and put aside finally, I have wished to gather up a few scraps of the work—work which, if not definitely relinquished yet, is now, like the neglected muse, pursued, with failing allegiance, and an unfrequent prayer—

Et tamen meas chartas Revisitote; sed pudenter et raro!—

which occupied, not unpleasantly, these autumn and winter nights. I send them to you—my oldest friend and friendliest critic. I might have chosen others, more spirited in treatment, perhaps, and of fresher and weightier interest. But it is better as it is. I fear that few of us can look back for many years on what we have written without finding that, like the rest of the world, we have much need to ask forgiveness. It can scarcely be right to revive the harsh or hasty judgments we pronounced upon contemporaries, whose feelings we unwittingly wounded; upon the

active Christian missionary, whom we thought an uncharitable theologian; upon the amiable scholar and the genial humourist, whom we thought an indifferent poet.

A few years ago, it would have been a labour of love to bind these sheaves together.* It is hardly so now. For, as I glance over the yellow and well-thumbed pages, I cannot but experience at moments a keen thrill of pain. You will feel with me, I know; for, indeed, there is no sharper sorrow in this world than that which is stirred by the sight of trifles, which are associated with the once familiar presence of those who have left us—with the true and generous hearts whose love was our best recompense, and the pleasant voices which will not greet us again.

No more painful duty, however, can be imagined than that of seeking a title. To write a book is a comparatively easy affair; but to find a name for it after it is written (especially when it is about nothing in particular) wearies the brain and affects the temper. A kind friend, whose little gem of a picture—the pure saintliness of Raphael, touched and intensified by the truthful and homely picturesqueness of Wilkie's genius—has been seen and loved by thousands, and tens of thousands, on either shore of the Atlantic, suggests that an author in such straits should "request the prayers of the congregation."





THE SPHINX.

A DISCOURSE ON THE IMPOTENCE OF HISTORY.

Theseus. I never may believe
These antique fables, nor these fairy toys.
A MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM.

WE sat on the Devil's-bridge, and swung our legs over the parapet, Reginald de Moreville and I.

The De Morevilles were a fine Norman family in the reign of David I., "that soir sanct for the Crown." The present representative inherits the feudal tastes of his house, without the burden of its acres.

The arch of a royal dome that hangs above the blue sea! Down the storm-stained sides of the precipice we can see the marrots standing like sentries along the slippery ledges, crowding around their fantastically coloured eggs, indulging in expressions of grotesque fun and uncouth endearment. Farther off the skua gulls, "white as ocean foam in the moon," "white as the consecrated snow that lies on Dian's lap" (choose between Shakspeare and Tennyson), float along the face of the cliffs, or hover above their nests on noiseless wings. Yet lower, the blue and shining deep beats against the iron bases of the hills, and moans among the caverned fissures where the seal and the otter lodge.

Reginald had been explaining to me the critical system which his experience had induced him to adopt. Like many ingenious gentlemen of the period, he cheerfully acquiesced in the inevitable. "Nothing is new, and nothing is true, and it don't matter." Since his cousin had thrown him over, however, his philosophical scepticism, without affecting his general health or his zeal at "parritch-time," had taken a more gloomy turn. The universe was in a state of helpless muddle, but it was best to leave it alone. There was no saying where it might stop if we once set it a-rolling.

"What do we know?" he would ask, looking benevolently into the abyss. "We have been trying to find out for six thousand years, and I don't see that we have made very much way yet. The universe will be abolished before we have proved that it exists.

"We have tacked together, indeed, a number of rules by which we regulate our morality and our digestion. We have built up pasteboard walls between us and the desolate and unpeopled unknown which lies beyond the rim of our life. With these—laws, traditions, religions—we fence out the infinite.

"Do not suppose that I undervalue our card houses. It is good that we have them. Without

their shelter we should go crazy. The man who feels how deep the darkness is, will be the last to attack them. He will be afraid even to lay a finger on them lest they go to pieces at his touch; he will breathe cautiously lest the thin partition should go down, lest the pale light should go out and let in the darkness.

"He knows that these elaborate and artificial codes are too positive to be credible, too scientific to be true. Can we digest into a system the infinite pulsations of the universe? That rare, subtle, and wondrous life which speeds like light through ether—how can we condense it into a chronicle or a creed?

"Not that he repudiates our moral or intellectual 'fixtures.' He does not care to molest them; to deny is to him more unpleasing than to dogmatise. Can I discover whether it be true or false? though it be false, it makes the world at least more habitable for men. Even the Genevese jailor, with his massive chains and ponderous bolts, is a not undesirable barrier against the anarchy which rages outside, and from which we are so feebly protected.

"Some golden words, rescued from the ages, have indeed been garnered into the barn. True or not, they help us as perhaps divine words only can help us. Passing from life into death, from the sun-light into the darkness, from these familiar faces and forms into an unfamiliar being whose manner and form and substance the imagination cannot grasp—some of these words do keep close to our hearts. Upon them we fix our eyes as the

sun grows dim, and the reluctant soul is torn from the tenement which it sustains. They help, it may be, to assuage the physical and spiritual pain of death—the pale terror of the Child of Time as he stands on the threshold of the eternal; the shudder of the mortal as it faces immortality; the deadly faintness which paralyses the heart as the cold airs out of infinite space strike chilly against the unclothed and disrobed humanity."

The sad and thoughtful scorn of our modern moralist is more weighty than the wickedest laughter. Is not our decent pity, our sympathy, our tolerance, our intellectual mercifulness, more fatal than riotous denial or indignant dissent—more effective than the rude weapons with which our fathers assailed those from whom they differed in council or creed?

To do Reginald justice, I must own that he is consistent. He has put his creed into practice; he has permitted it to colour his mind and tone his convictions. You trace it through his briefest letters and his most familiar talk. And thus this day, after discussing for some time the character of John Grahame of Claverhouse, whose vindication by Mr. Napier we had been reading, and the two views of that character which history presents to us—on this panel the butcher and the assassin, on that the heroic leader, with a rare genius for war, the politic and tolerant statesman, with a rare capacity for civil organization—I was not surprised to hear him say—

"I will judge no man, dead or living. What frightful blunders we make! what wretched verdicts

we return! We condemn the honest man; we acquit the rogue and the traitor. No; I am a historical sceptic. History aspires to become a science; a science of history is a dream and a delusion. The historian is no more a man of science than the alchemist or the magician."

Whether a science of history be possible, or whether indeed history in any sense be a practicable undertaking, is a point upon which much controversy may be held. The difficulty—one of the difficulties, at least—lies here. History discourses of men. It sets forth their characters; it analyses their motives. If from the evidence within its reach it can do this with an assurance, or at least with a reasonable probability, that in the majority of cases it speaks the truth, then history is what it professes to be-a credible record of the past. But can we trust the professions it makes? Is it true that it possesses materials of a quality and quantity sufficient to enable it in any single case to acquit or condemn? Will the sentence which we have passed on Saul, or Constantine, or Charlemagne, or Richard III., or Washington, or Robert Peel, bear examination, or the ordinary tests which the courts of law apply to any dispute about facts?

"My rule is very simple," was the scoffing remark with which Reginald escaped from the discussion. "The rogue wins—the righteous man is defeated. No good man consequently has ever become famous, and history only chronicles the knaves."

A simple enough rule, doubtless; rather too

simple to be safe perhaps, all simple general rules being apt to harbour falsehood, and tending upon the whole to mislead. But though put by Reginald in a somewhat extreme and absolute form, the argument is substantially adopted by many leaders of opinion among us, and some determination of it one way or other is needed, before we can proceed very far in our inquiry.

"Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." Such a passage would seem to teach an absolutely inconsistent doctrine. But this is hardly so. For it cannot mean that what is called "success in life" is the constant, the invariable accompaniment of a righteous life. A righteous man may starve, still it is quite true that if we observe the simple laws of health, and prudence, and temperance which God has prescribed for us, we shall not want food and raiment as the drunkard who neglects and breaks them must do. "These things" are the natural fruit of a righteous life in a world where righteous law prevails; but unfortunately in this world righteous law does not always prevail; nay, it happens at times that society grows so utterly demoralized, so divorced from truth and godliness, that a righteous man cannot succeed, must, on the contrary, if he would remain a true man, submit to be crushed and beaten down. And at all times the rarest virtues do not and cannot obtain adequate recognition, or fit recompense here. "The martyr dies"—that is merely the briefest and most emphatic way of saying that the righteous man may fail, must fail if the world has reached a certain point of disorganization. His nobility comes into conflict with its baseness; and through the pain of the cross, or the smoke of the faggots, the sufferer escapes to his Father's arms. There is his recompense, and some have held that such defeat is the truest victory; that the soldier who falls upon the battle-field with a sob of agony, yet with the ring of gathering triumph in his ears, cannot be said to be ultimately unsuccessful. Saint Paul meant something like this, I suppose, when in a noble paradox he described the Christian life. "As deceivers, and yet true; as unknown, and yet well-known; as dying, and behold we live; as chastened, and not killed; as sorrowful, yet alway rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things."

I remember seeing once at Venice—in the arsenal, I think—a morsel of bread preserved under a glass frame, with a label attached to it, which bore that on the 15th July 1849—the 15th July when the protracted siege was approaching its close—this scrap sold for, I forget the exact sum, but a frightful famine price. A sermon by an Austrian moralist, and meant to inculcate a moral lesson! "You see what the love of liberty, what the hatred of despotism, costs. This is what you make of resistance to lawful authority, of rebellion against the powers that be, not apparently a very paying business." So reasoned the Austrian moralist in his grim practical fashion, a fashion not altogether unpractised by moralists elsewhere. The dear loaf was the sole tangible memorial

that he could find of that great fight on the Lagoons. This was the coin which the patriots had earned here in Venice; this was what virtue, self-sacrifice, heroic zeal for freedom could buy on the 15th of July 1849. That joyful spirit of devotion, that magnanimity of soul, that devout enthusiasm which breathed a spark of the old Venetian manliness into the slaves of the barbarian, whatever they may be worth in the next world, "where moth and rust do not corrupt," clearly do not profit in this. A morsel of bread for a dollar!

"He was a rogue, and therefore he succeeded." True sometimes, true often, yet not invariably true. The rogues are not always successful. The universe (or what Milton called "the divine decree") crushes them sometimes. Like children who sport with a tiger, the heavy paw, which they are tempting, and skilfully eluding, will be down upon them yet. And though the nations are mainly governed by the meaner and baser virtues, sometimes the might of love, the fire of charity, conquers the world.

I have said that all simple general rules applied to history and historical personages tend to mislead, but have we not heard, from learned Germans and others, of "the philosophy of history?"

Most men no doubt, except those who see in the career of mankind "a supreme ironic procession, with laughter of gods in the background," believe that it conveys some moral lesson. The world's history is not a wanton carnival, a mere blindfolded dance of death. Upon this consciousness has arisen what is somewhat pompously de-

nominated "the philosophy of history." assumed that certain axiomatic propositions are the fruit of the world's experience during the six thousand years whereof some record remains to us. The Jewish commonwealth, hoary Eastern despotisms beside Tigris and Euphrates, beneath the pyramids, beyond the Indus, "the old and elegant humanity of Greece," "the grand panorama of the mistress of the world falling to wreck under the the barbarians," the nervous life and sinewy art of mediæval republics, are supposed to have taught us something. What? The theory of righteous government, the laws by which the rise and decline of nations are regulated. But how many of these will bear the test by which they fail to be tried, of conflicting races, institutions, and religions? We see a nation rise into lusty manhood; a few decades elapse, it withers away and perishes. say, the simple virtues of the Republic kept it great; it died because the subjects of the monarchy grew cowardly, vicious, and effeminate. But will the observance of any laws preserve the vigour of a race, or endow a State with immortality? any philosophical conclusions arrest the process of decay? Do we not, here as elsewhere, confound cause and effect? It is not the effeminate vices which kill; they indicate only that the vital energy, the principle of life, has worn out. When his years are accomplished, the man must die, and a nation cannot be kept alive any more than a man can.

Some plain moral rules certainly, which it is an abuse of language to elevate into a "philosophy

of history," are now commonly recognized by thinking men, who, however, except in one or two places, do not occupy the ministerial benches. There is a moral order after which, throughout its disorder, the world strives. Obedience to certain rules, it is observed, is best calculated to secure this order. "Persecution is bad—liberty is good." Not by any means a novel discovery, seeing that it was announced eighteen hundred years ago, though it has taken, indeed, the better part of that time to convince us that Saint Paul did not vindicate the inquisition. But even yet, and among ourselves—" a race ever famous and foremost in the achievements of liberty "-how false historically is the logic on which the principles of toleration are rested, and what an amount of practical evil has this falsehood, like all other falsehoods, to answer for.

Magna est veritas, et prævalebit. In the kingdom of God it will. But we have got in the meantime into a sadly confused and disorganized world, where truth, upon the whole, seems to have rather a hard time of it, and enough to do to hold its own. Persecution, the argument continues, is thus a mistake, not less than a crime. It destroys the heretic, but it propagates the heresy. being an effective instrument, we had better leave it alone. On this assumption the policy of toleration is too frequently defended. To build on such an argument is to build on the sand. tory discourses no such monotonous music. secution has slain the true as well as the false. The false, as well as the true, has triumphed, in spite of persecution. The martyr's blood has not

always fallen upon fruitful soil: his dying appeal has been heard unheeded, and even his own disciples have denied the truth for which He died. We may be sure that the stake and the cross, sagaciously employed, are not ineffective. minds secretly acknowledge the power which the inquisitor wields; and few men, except the very few tempered of finer metal, have the firmness to resist authority when it comes arrayed in the majesty and terrors of the law-armed with fire and sword. Thus, in one sense persecution may be considered a not unsuccessful experiment; seeing that those who have employed it dexterously have often arrested, and not unfrequently extintinguished, the spirit of revolt. Many a "heresy" has died in its cradle, which, had it been left to ripen unmolested, would have blown into a victorious creed, and a dominant church. An uneasy suspicion of this fact lies at the root of much of the intolerance we see around us. "If persecution be a success, let us be persecutors. Great is the Record, et prævalebit."

The feeling is very natural, and as respects the travesty of history against which it is directed, not perhaps unpardonable. It is well that a moral insurrection should force us, now and again, to sift popular misconstructions, and seek a securer basis of fact on which to rest our conduct and our convictions. In the present case our inveterate habit of making success the criterion and measure of truth is chiefly to blame. But a true doctrine of toleration needs no assumption of success. Intolerance is a crime and a mistake, simply because its

fruits are bad. The moral results of persecution are worthless. The inquisitor is either resisted or obeyed. If the victim resists he is strangled, and "the worst use we can make of a man is to hang him." When he obeys, it is only an obedience of the lip that he renders; the threat of the steel or the faggot cannot change a conviction in the heart; but he has submitted to an unworthy humiliation; his character is degraded, his self-respect is forfeited, his life is rendered false. The moralist who regards intolerance by the light thus cast upon it, will not lose his confidence in freedom, though history should assure him that Philip did not burn, nor Alva butcher in vain.

"There is a divine order in the government of the world, as there is in the government of each individual in it. What hurts the man, hurts the race; what is a blessing to the one, blesses the other." Some such vague generalization may be hazarded; can we say more? I confess I cannot. A dramatic unity may govern the whole; the successive pages in the history of mankind may contain the unfolding acts of a great drama. whether this be so or no, I do not think that we, the actors, have got the key to the situation, or that we are able intelligibly to arrange the parts. History, to all practical intents and purposes, is the record of the individual life alone. But as it is impossible to arrange the characters or the motives of the men "who make history" under any simple division or any general law, what is the historian to do? Deprived of any plain rule of guidance, how can he undertake his task?

can we rely on the estimate which he forms, or what guarantee vouches for his fidelity?

"Surely," I said to Reginald, "it will be possible to write our biographies, at least. There will be abundant materials to enable the historian to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, about us."

"No," he replied, "I do not agree with you. Depend upon it, our annalists will entirely misunderstand us. But I want no biography. I would rather have that;" and he pointed across the ravine to the rustic churchyard, which, with its ivied shaft—"a broken chancel with a broken cross"—and its innumerous gravestones bathed in the crimson sunset, skirted the rocks.

It was the Sabbath day—a Sabbath summer evening after the afternoon service. A homely group—village tradespeople, I suppose—the father in a primitive black coat of formal cut, the mother and her little ones neat and trim, and in their "Sunday-best," wander among the tombs. pause for a moment before a little grave, quite by itself as yet, and then the children run off, laughing and rosy-cheeked; and the father follows in a musing mood-somewhat vacant, but not unblessed. Only the mother waits; and taking her clean white handkerchief (still folded as when it came out of the lavender-scented drawer in the morning) from her antique outside pocket, brushes away a speck of sea-green moss, that had gathered over one of the letters in "little Effie's" name on her tombstone. These homely charities to our dead-how true and heartfelt they are! That

tender carefulness is more eloquent than any éloge; more grateful than an uneasy fame, or a vexed immortality.

Probably Reginald was right. We know how easy it is to misconstrue the motives of those around us; how difficult it is to guage our own. Like the old landless Earl, we are constantly compelled to confess—

And I myself sometimes despise myself, Nor know I whether I be very base Or very manful, whether very wise Or very foolish.

Human nature is such a capricious subject, presenting, even in its most simple manifestations, contrasts as sharp as those dwelt upon by Saint Paul in his startling paradox; and the evidence on which we are forced to frame our verdicts is at best so fragmentary and inconclusive. Need we wonder, then, that the easy and reckless judgments we pronounce upon the subtle and volatile element -animula, blandula, vagula, hospes, comesquesubmitted to our analysis, and the strange combinations and unexpected relations which it constantly forms, should often be frightfully false? How often, whenever our greatest men are concerned, especially where they have wandered from the beaten track, is history a libel, and our adulation an insult! We inter the truth with their bones; we perpetuate vices and virtues which live It is needless to travel only in our imagination. far for illustrations, they meet us on every hand.

Consider, for instance, the career and character of Shelley. Some critics have not hesitated to

affirm that even Shelley the writer is misunderstood; that had his genius been allowed time and opportunity to mature, it would have ripened into something very different from what we see it. I doubt whether any such change was to be looked for.

When a man has passed his five-and-twentieth year, the intellect does not grow much. We change, no doubt; but we change because we gain a richer experience, not in logic, but in feeling. The sorrow of life elevates and refines our perceptions. We look back with temperate pity upon the unsubstantial dreams of boyhood, and cherish, as more truly desirable than its "vain, deluding joys," our passionate farewells, our communion with the dead, our wider but sadder horizons. These teach us to yield up our mortal bodies to immortal death; these help to reconcile us to that separation of corruption and incorruption which, while the flame yet burns clear upon the altar, it is so difficult, so hard to realize.

Men, therefore, whose writings owe their fascination to "the wise, sad valour" which lies at the root of all true humour, and to the mellow autumnal hue which falls like the golden lights of harvest aslant the page; the moralists who take Vanitas! for their theme—Montaigne, Charles Lamb, William Thackeray—appear to acquire a new force and faculty as they grow old. That tender sagacity and gentleness of touch which charm us so, is long in being learned; 'tis a second nature, scarcely quite formed until the hair is gray, and the brow furrowed.

But Shelley belonged to another school. The ripe autumnal tints are the superficial colouring of a deep moral earnestness, of certain tragic elements in the nature, kept down often perforce by lock and bar, of a Puritanic steadiness and singleness of purpose, such as we do not find in Shelley. The poetry that is most characteristic of his mind (the faculty of expression being once acquired, and he acquired it when a boy) is written best in early life; and Shelley, I think, had written his best before he died. His thought, as well as his feeling, was passionate, not contemplative; wherein he differed widely from Keats, whose emotion is always thoughtful, and whose "sensationalism" (to use an ugly word) is ever subtly lined with veins of meditation, and of rich and involved reflectiveness. Had Keats's genius been permitted to ripen, it would have gathered a richer fragrance, a mellower pensiveness, a steadier constructive force (as we partly see in Hyperion, the last and greatest of "the astonishing remnants of his mind"); whereas Shelley would have remained very much the same—simple, fervid, eager, oratorical, passionate, and never quite tranquil—however long he had lived. I even doubt whether his poetry would have gained greater definiteness the absence of any special human interest being always very noticeable in it—for his vagueness and obscurity do not hide the inexperience and extravagance of boyhood merely, but indicate, moreover, the inveterate and constitutional habit of a mind, unwilling to contemplate, and unfitted to seize, the concrete. What we see of his life, is

partly true of his genius. He was perfectly pure all his days; but his purity was the purity of childhood, not of manhood. His white and chaste imagination remained unsullied; but we miss that light of light, that glory as of fire, which streams from the imagination—"chastened but not killed, persecuted but not forsaken, cast down but not destroyed"—which has been tried and tempted, and has triumphed.

It is not, however, Shelley's genius, but his life, which illustrates the argument I am urging.

The popular impression of his career which prevails, even among the great majority of educated Englishmen, is somewhat to this effect:—A politician who preached rebellion; a law-breaker who lived in adultery; an atheist who denied his God. A character in every line eminently repulsive, from which we shrink with natural horror.

This is the popular view; the true one I believe to be very different. But many causes contribute to make it unacceptable; and these causes operate not in Shelley's case only, but have coloured, and continue to colour, our estimate of ever so many remarkable men. Of him, as of them, the religious public has written in hysterics —the hysterical being a favourite form of rhetoric with women and churches. Not that the world is altogether in fault, nor Shelley quite blameless. The relations between society and a keenlysensitive and delicately-fibred man (such as Shelley was), must always be peculiar. His nerves cannot stand the wear and tear of society, and society has no tenderness for his nerves. Nor

is this all. For Shelley's justification there is needed an active effort of moral sympathy, a fire of charity, a boldness of love, which few of us dare to offer. His is one of those natures which require to be judged by a more lenient code than is written in the statute-book; and society cannot be blamed very much if it decline to recognise exceptional cases, and adheres through good report and evil report to the strict letter of the law. For the common race of men its tests are probably the safest. As history, however, has for the most part to do with uncommon men, the tradition of the vulgar is thus calculated, for yet another reason, to mislead and distract the historian.

I have summarised the popular estimate, and we can see how such an estimate may be entertained, not without apology. But we, who want to know the truth, rather than to find apologies for believing a lie, after looking into the matter (and fortunately the materials for doing so have not yet been entirely destroyed, as would have been the case had the poet lived five hundred or a thousand years ago), cannot but be aware how entirely false such a judgment is. The true Shelley is quite a different being; the real Shelley career is quite a different career. Here is the other side of the panel.

A man of true nobility, of a happy and eager benevolence, and of a most fearless purity. He is not a sensualist; on the contrary, his habits are ascetic, and he abstains from the simplest pleasures. Though he loves truth and liberty, and hates evil and despotism vehemently, he is gentle as a woman in manner and at heart. Still, a screw is loose somewhere. "A mad angel," some one said of him; and in certain respects Shelley was never quite sane. The symptoms of the disease may be traced through the fits of hopeless dread and despair which ever and again dashed his bright child-like cheerfulness, his bird-like enjoyment of the dawn, and the dewy fields, and the silver lining of the clouds; in the keen and extravagant pain which trifles caused him. The fine and sensitive mechanism wanted balance. The moral faculty of control, which is the ballast of the imagination, the sheet-anchor which holds the mind to its moorings, had been in his constitution overlooked or purposely omitted.

And in respect to that incident in his career which is least easily justified, and which even to understand aright requires a strong effort of charity, can we expect, or should we desire, society to be able to deal fairly with him? And yet the plain truth—whether it is well that it should be known or not—is undoubtedly a very different thing from that which angry polemics and hostile critics have represented it to be.

It is a Greek picture, with somewhat more than Greek pathos in it. A Greek picture translated into the grave Christian world.

On the shore of a sunny Italian lake a couple of children, a boy and girl, embrace each other. That beautiful antique of the naked Cupid and Psyche, what has a prim modern society to do with that? And we, are not we immortal too? is not our beauty and our happiness imperishable

as the marble? Alas! no; a sad burthen of change and decay runs through our mortal life, and, as the night wind moans among the falling leaves of the olive, the conscience is tortured by dim forebodings of retribution, and a desolate weariness, which the marble does not feel, makes our hearts restless. For the daily life of Englishmen and Christian women the romance of the marble will not serve.

And she—the girl of whom such hard words are spoken, what of her? Her story is harder to read truly even than his, and needs a more delicate reserve of sympathy. With grave composure the maiden of fifteen left her home with the poet—a home where she had been taught to disregard the moral etiquette which rules society, and where she had learned boldness in speculation without losing modesty of feeling. sedate girlhood that looks through these tranquil eyes that do not falter, had not been overpowered by passion. What she did, she did advisedly. Her will and her reason consented; but it was a perilous leap. So, though she does not repine, she feels at times that she has done a wrong to herself; and her sad composure, her gentle firmness, her almost cheerful resignation, are very touching. The world is against them, and the world's law, and they must bear its stigma as they best may; but the love of poetry, nay, of Shelley, does not quite fill the gap, or satisfy the sociable womanly 'Even when Shelley is by her side there is a certain solitariness in that rapt ideal life; and when he is taken away her tearless pain is

tragic; it is Despair pitifully striving to be calm. This tranquil and dignified control is the very antipodes of the poet's eager vehemence, and was probably the "contrasted charm" which attracted the boy, and attached him for life, to the daring daughter of the republican moralist.*

But it may be said—"You have selected an extreme and difficult case. It need not surprise us that it should be perplexing nicely to disentangle and arrange the involved network of the

* Mrs. Shelley was an admirable writer, and the wording of her letters is often very felicitous. Of her infant son she says—"The little boy is nearly three times as big as when he was born; he thrives well, and cries little, and is now taking a right-down, earnest sleep, with all his heart in his shut eyes." Among the letters after her husband's death, are some of the saddest and most wretchedly truthful ever written. "How lovely," she exclaims, in one passage, "does he paint death to be, and with what heartfelt sorrow does one repeat that line,—

But I am chain'd to time, and cannot thence depart! How long do you think I shall live? As long as my mother? eleven long years must intervene. I am now on the eve of completing my five-and-twentieth year. How drearily young for one so lost as I! How young in years for one who lives ages each day in sorrow! Think you that those moments are counted in my life as in other people's? Ah! no. The day before the sea closed over mine own Shelley, he said to Marianne, 'If I die to-morrow, I have lived to be older than my father. I am ninety years of age!' This also may I say. 'During these last sufferings' I have felt an oppression at my heart I never felt before. It is not a palpitation, but a stringemento, which is quite convulsive, and did I not struggle greatly would cause violent hysterics. Looking on the sea, or hearing its roar—his dirge—it comes upon me; but these are corporeal sufferings I can get over." "God grant I may die young! A new race is springing about me. At the age of twenty-six I am in the condition of an aged person. All my old friends are gone; I have no wish to form new, I cling to the few remaining, but they slide away, and my heart fails when I think by how few ties I hold to the world." Mrs. Shelley died on the 21st February 1851, in the fifty-fourth year of her age.

poet's brain; but plain men and plain facts are easily read." But it is precisely in such a statement that a dangerous fallacy lurks. For plain men and plain facts are not by any means so much the rule as they are supposed to be; and, until we take an extreme case, we are apt to assume that the characters of a man's mind are always written in large and prominent type, like that employed by bill-stickers and similar functionaries; whereas, the truth is that all men resemble more or less the American poet, Edgar Poe. The midnight witnessed a scene of mad riot and drunken debauchery, and Poe was its hero. with the morning light the nobler soul awoke, and with strange and weird grace, with rich and fitful music, never entirely free, it may be, from a certain sensuality of expression, if not of thought, the besmirched and ugly Titan greeted the dawn. Is it the same man, or has a new spirit taken possession of the foul body in which the drunkard harboured over-night? Nor did this sharp antagonism manifest itself as a conflict merely between the moral and the imaginative sides of his mind, a conflict in which either side alternately claimed the victory. Regarded in some of his moods, he resembles—to intensify the Shelley comparison—a demon gone crazy; and yet one or two who knew him best, and who saw deepest into that forlorn soul, loved and clung to him with undespairing devotion to the last. Had his moral nature been utterly polluted this could not have been; even a woman's love would have ceased to absolve him.

And moreover, the "plainest" facts are doublefaced. Language was not exactly given us to conceal our thoughts, yet words, written or spoken, furnish no invariable index to the mind. all that has been said about Charlotte Brontë, for instance, the mystery of much that she wrote how it was possible that she could have written it -remains unexplained. Actions, again, are as deceptive as words. The action is not a garment into which the motive fits. It does not represent with any precision the spirit which lurks within. The flower in the upper world is the constant and unvarying expression of the bulb below; but in human history there are no such inevitable rela-The same root throws out diverse flowers; the same flower blows from diverse roots. rical critics quarrel about facts; it is not the fact, but the application to be put upon it, that presents the real enigma.

I cannot illustrate this point better than by turning to Lord Macaulay's narrative of the execution of John Brown. We have all been impressed by the horror of that narrative. The historian's assault upon Dundee is not more conspicuous for its bitter vindictiveness than for its masterly ability.

"John Brown, a poor carrier of Lanarkshire was, for his singular piety, commonly called the Christian carrier. Many years later, when Scotland enjoyed rest, prosperity, and religious freedom, old men who remembered the evil days described him as one versed in divine things, blameless in life, and so peaceable that the tyrants could find

no offence in him, except that he absented himself from the public worship of the Episcopalians. the first of May he was cutting turf when he was seized by Claverhouse's dragoons, rapidly examined, convicted of nonconformity, and sentenced It is said that even among the soldiers to death. it was not easy to find an executioner. For the wife of the poor man was present; she led one little child by the hand; it was easy to see that she was about to give birth to another; and even these wild and hard-hearted men, who named one another Beelzebub and Apollyon, shrank from the great wickedness of butchering her husband before her face. The prisoner, meanwhile, raised above himself by the near prospect of eternity, prayed loud and fervently as one inspired, till Claverhouse, in a fury, shot him dead. It was reported by credible witnesses that the widow cried out in her agony, 'Well, sir, well, the day of reckoning will come;' and that the murderer replied, 'To man I can answer for what I have done, and as for God I will take him into mine own hand!' Yet it was rumoured that, even on his seared conscience and adamantine heart, the dying ejaculations of his victim made an impression that was never effaced."*

^{*} History of England, vol. i. p. 495. Mr. Mark Napier, in the first volume of his Life of Claverhouse, has dissected this passage sentence by sentence. We think his answer entirely satisfactory. The relations of men like Wodrow and Walker must be received with the utmost caution, and Lord Macaulay's narrative, derived from Wodrow, is curiously erroneous. But though we are disposed to go the whole length that Mr. Napier goes, we assume in the text, for the sake of the argument, the general accuracy of Lord Macaulay's rela-

The apologists of Claverhouse have attempted to vindicate his character by asserting that the "Claverhouse," they say, is tradition is false. not guilty, because he did not shoot John Brown." But suppose he had shot him, and with his own hand (as I incline to believe he did), would that admission close the controversy? Surely not. am convinced that Claverhouse sincerely believed that the measures authorized by the Government were necessary for the pacification of the country. The Covenanters, in his opinion, were bold and resolute fanatics, whose organization was dangerous to the Commonwealth. If such was opinion, would he have been justified in allowing any of their more prominent leaders to escape? On these men mercy was thrown away. perilous confederacy was to be repressed, it required to be done with a ruthless and unsparing The Government consequently had vested in him the power of life and death; a system of martial law had been proclaimed in the disturbed districts; and if Claverhouse shot John Brown, he only exercised the authority which had been conferred upon him, and which was deemed essential to the security of the realm. John Brown may have been a Christian man, but at the same time he was a leader of the disaffected. If it was politic to inflict punishment in any case, he was

tion—viz., that John Brown was shot, and, in consequence of the mutiny of his troopers, by the hand of Claverhouse. That the great historian did not implicitly believe the story, may, we think, be gathered from the words in which he refers to the testimony on which it rests, and which we have printed in italics.



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clearly one of those who merited punishment. The policy of the Government may have been cruel and foolish; but with its cruelty or folly we have as little concern as with the virtues of the sufferer, or the distress of his family. The rebel who disobeys the law, be it righteous or unrighteous, must not shrink from the consequences; and if he dies, he dies because he has wilfully chosen to defy its penalties. A future age may pronounce him a martyr, and not a traitor; that is his reward, and with that he must learn to be content. Claverhouse shot him with his own hand." but he did so because his troopers, affected by the constant heroism of the victim, refused to become his executioners. Does not this circumstance absolutely absolve Claverhouse? Direct and dramatic impressions exercise a powerful influence over vulgar and inferior minds; and the affecting spectacle had unnerved his men. But Claverhouse, a soldier who belonged to a different order, could not permit his pity to subjugate his conviction of duty, or blind him, even momentarily, to the large national interests entrusted to his keeping. The crisis was sharp, and it claimed a sharp remedy. His men had refused to obey his orders—they were in virtual mutiny. It was imperative not only to vindicate the law, but to read them a lesson which should bring them back to their obedience. He himself became the executioner. He undertook the wretched and miserable duty. Its ugliness and its horror did not appal him. The office of the hangman is always a shameful office; and it asked perhaps an almost higher heroism, an even steadier effort of devotion, to inflict, than to endure, the blow.

I do not say that I have rightly understood the motives by which Claverhouse was influenced; I say only that the event is susceptible of this interpretation, and that such an explanation is more consistent with probability than that which attributes to a gentleman and a statesman an act of wanton and bloody brutality. But it is at least abundantly evident that when we establish the fact of the execution, we do not thereby put an end to the controversy. The fact may be read either way. When he shot John Brown, John Grahame either committed murder, or with wisdom, energy, and real mercy, he vindicated the law he had been commissioned to vindicate.

One other illustration, and I have done—one drawn from the life of an earlier Graham: "James Graham, sometime Marquis of Montrose," as he is described in the indictment.

Montrose, in the earlier part of the civil conflict, adhered to the Covenant. He afterwards went over to the king; and Whig writers denounce the baseness of the desertion. Even Mr. Napier is fain to offer an apology. But is it necessary either to apologise or condemn? Montrose did undoubtedly desert his friends. The fact cannot be disputed; but still the vital question is left untouched.

Mr. Napier, I have said, apologises for Montrose's early adhesion to the Covenant, and his subsequent desertion. No apology, as it seems to me, was needed. The fact is, on the contrary

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strikingly characteristic of the habitual honesty and moderation of his character. He was clearly one of those staid, clear-headed, somewhat impracticable men, who do what they consider their duty at all hazards. A moderate man; a man wellbalanced and sagacious; not by any means a fit tool for the zealots of either party. Most of his brother royalists were royalists by instinct and They threw themselves with blind fidelity into the gulf. Charles was their divinely commissioned master; had he been cruel as Herod, and faithless as Nero, they would have sacrificed themselves with equal alacrity. Montrose is an independent thinker who judges for himself. His king, his countrymen, his friends may look hardly upon him; but with sword and pen, and the blessing of heaven, he will succour the righteous policy. The national faith, which his conscience approves, has been attacked, and the national faith must be defended. So he subscribes the first covenant, and leads the Covenanting army against the Northern Prelatists. But he will as little surrender his honest convictions, his intellectual freedom, the moral rectitude of his nature, to the priest as to the king. For he is constitutionally tolerant; he is really attached to the wise liberty for which he fights; and he adheres to his traditions with the habitual tenacity and seriousness of his character. Even when in their ranks the Presbyterian Inquisitors find him, in this respect, "very hard to be guided." And as soon as the suspicion crosses his mind that Argyle and the confederates are playing the king

false, that political change and not religious freedom is their aim, he quits them at once and finally.

For it was no accident that made Montrose a royalist. His nature was essentially conservative. His classical culture, his serene and somewhat antique cast of character, the habitual sobriety of his opinions, separated him from men who were driven by an imperious passion, who obeyed irregular and visionary impulses, who raked up with inflexible harshness the embers of civil strife. conscience was sensitive; the old landmarks were sacred in his eyes; his meditative intellect was averse to change. Had the cause of the Parliament been clearly and obviously righteous, it is possible that he might have risen above his creed, and disengaged himself from its restraints. he had no such persuasion. The struggle, as he viewed it, was a struggle between the national king and an ambitious soldiery, who would ultimately enslave the state; and he was not stirred by the hysteric passion, which was curiously blended in the character of Cromwell with wary coolness and common sense, and which alternately found expression in riotous irony and fervent prayer.

And Montrose understood earlier and more clearly than most of his contemporaries the malign nature of the struggle on which the monarchy had embarked. He detected the utterly hostile nature of the elements that, at length after a century of compromise, had come into direct collision, and from the first he felt, like the Carthaginian, that it

was an Inexpiable war. Among all the soldiers and statesmen who then fought and intrigued, he was the only man, except one, and that one more profound and politic perhaps, but less honest, and transparently truthful than himself, who distinctly comprehended the fatal issues involved. the king hesitated and procrastinated, while his advisers recommended compromise and delay, Montrose, like Cromwell, went straight to the mark. " Hold no His advice to Charles never varied. terms with the rebels. Either you or they must go down. A truce, a compromise is impracticable; not to be desired if it were practicable." that, in this light the most interesting letter the Marquis ever wrote is that indited from "Inverlochy in Lochaber," immediately after he had beaten Argyle. Amid the debris of battle, and on the bleak shores of the ensanguined lake, he dictates a State paper to the king. Hot from fight, and flushed with victory, he reasons as a statesman might reason in his cabinet. Rumours have reached him that Charles is in treaty with the rebels, but he cannot believe that the report is "Your Majesty may remember," he continues, "how much you said you were convinced I was in the right in my opinion of them. The more your Majesty grants, the more will be asked, and I have too much reason to know that they will not rest satisfied with less than making your Majesty a king of straw." True and striking The political sagacity, and the statesmanwords! like discernment, of the Marquis, were certainly quite as noteworthy as his genius for war, and it was morally impossible for such a man to remain in the army of the covenant after a certain period of the war.

So much for our interpretation of facts; but, moreover, in how many cases can we be sure that the fact is a fact? I believe that if we were to bring a keen analytic spirit of criticism to bear upon many of the most undisputed "facts" in modern history, we should find that the evidence on which they rest is singularly incomplete. I do not admire that morbid sceptical ingenuity which the Archbishop of Dublin has so happily criticised; I ask nothing more than the ordinary circumstantial evidence, without which a British jury will refuse to convict for petty larceny. It is of course difficult to make this point clear, for the argument necessarily proceeds upon the hypothesis that in the majority of cases the falsehood has not been Illustrations, however, are not wanting. detected. The misrepresentation has occasionally been refuted in time, before the evidence was lost, or the actors had left the stage. I have occasionally noted down one or two of these; the one which I now select is perhaps as striking as any, seeing that it concerns a great statesman with whose presence we are all familiar, and that the whole of the transactions occurred within the memory of those who are yet in the via mezzio.

The conduct of Sir Robert Peel, when in 1827 he declined to join the ministry which Mr. Canning had been called on to form, is one of the unfortunate passages in his career. He tried to shew that it had been dictated by strictly pure and

honourable motives, by blind devotion to Protestantism, by conscientious repugnance to Catholic emancipation; but it is impossible to doubt that jealousy of Mr. Canning—a motive natural enough no doubt, but not meriting any special admiration —impelled him to take the course he did. circumstances appear to put this beyond reasonable doubt. Catholic emancipation, under Mr. Canning's, as under Lord Liverpool's government, remained an open question, one on which the members of the cabinet were divided, and one therefore which Sir Robert was at liberty to oppose, or to deal with as he thought most expedient. His position, in fact, as the Protestant representative in the administration, would have been considerably less embarrassing under Mr. Canning than under Lord Liverpool; for in 1827, immediately before the formation of the new ministry, the annual resolution in favour of a settlement of the Catholic claims, by one of those sudden and inexplicable ebbs in the tide of public opinion which the politician so frequently observes, failed for the first time during many sessions to command a majority in the Commons. The apology was evidently a lame one, and was conclusively refuted by his subsequent conduct. He refused to join Mr. Canning in the spring of 1827; yet in the summer of 1828 he was ready to propose, and in 1829 he actually carried, the Catholic Emancipation Act. Had he been animated by this vehement dislike, by this invincible hostility, to the principle of the measure, is it possible that in a single year his convictions could have suffered so entire a change?

The truth, is he took up a wrong position, one inconsistent with his character. Sir Robert was not made of the stuff of which martyrs are made. His convictions were provisional; he had no ardent or deeply-rooted principles of belief. The consequence was, that, unsustained by principle, he could not resist pressure. Whenever the majority went over to the other side, whenever authority was arrayed against him, he began to suspect the soundness of his judgment, and the logic of his conclusions. It was a grave mistake for a statesman of this habit of mind to assume the tone he assumed. A political fanatic might have declined to join Mr. Canning for the reasons assigned by Sir Robert, but Sir Robert was not a fanatic.

But another and more specific accusation has been brought against him—curious, perplexing, in some respects inexplicable. It rose up against him at the close of his official career, and driven home by Lord George Bentinck's rude and undisciplined vindictiveness, and barbed with the classic reproach of Disraeli, "Si tu oblitus es, at Dii meminerunt, meminit Fides," stung him to the quick. The charge was to this effect. refused to join Mr. Canning in 1827; or, as Lord George bitterly put it, "had chased and hunted an illustrious relative of mine to death," because he was of opinion that the Catholic claims ought not to be conceded; and yet in 1825, two years before, he had stated to Lord Liverpool that the time for concession had arrived. The inference was inevitable. Both statesmen being agreed as to the necessity for legislation, personal rivalry,

wounded ambition, base jealousy, were and could be the only feelings which had induced him to desert his old colleague in his need.

The evidence on which the case was rested appeared singularly complete. It was neither more nor less than a confidence volunteered to the House of Commons by Sir Robert in 1829. He then admitted, it was asserted, that he had made this declaration to Lord Liverpool in 1825. The speech was reported at length in the Times, in the Mirror of Parliament, and in Hansard. The passage appeared in the Times and in the Mirror of Parliament; not in Hansard nor elsewhere. The reports in the Times were then, as now, remarkably full and accurate; and those in the Mirror of Parliament were the result of a deliberate investigation undertaken by all the reporters, "who met together, compared reports, and sent that which gave the fullest report of one part of a speech, and that which gave the fullest report of another," and who thus, as it were, collectively guaranteed the verbal accuracy of the compilation. The logical inference in those circumstances, undoubtedly was, that the words had actually been spoken. A sin of omission in such a case is more probable than a sin of commission. A reporter may often omit or condense a statement, but he very seldom interpolates one; and the appearance of the passage in the Mirror of Parliament was reasonably enough held to prove that all the reporters were agreed that some such declaration had been made. Nor did the evidence for the prosecution close here. For not only did

Sir Robert deliver a speech, but it elicited a reply, and Sir Edward Knatchbull, the "Protestant" hero of the hour, in a celebrated oration, specifically alluded to the admission, and denounced his leader's perfidy—without reply, remonstrance, or correction from Sir Robert.

On the other hand, Sir Robert, in the most explicit terms, denied that he had made any confession to the House of Commons in 1829, or that any communication passed between him and Lord Liverpool in 1825. We are bound to believe him. What we know of his political character no doubt renders it not unlikely that in 1825, when a large majority supported the Catholics, he had begun to feel that "the situation" was becoming hopeless; but Sir Robert was keenly sensitive to what affected his personal honour, and he could not lie. We are convinced that the charge is false. And yet, how many historical accusations rest on such full or If Lord George Bentinck's exact legal evidence? animosity had not afforded him an opportunity to repel the indictment, history would have recorded, and it would have been vain to dispute, that Sir Robert had treacherously deserted Mr. Canning.

To this point, then, we have brought the argument. But even yet we have not fully enumerated the obstacles which beset the historian. Most of our illustrations have been purposely selected from what may be called the present time. But if we find it impracticable to estimate with any confidence the characters and the motives of the people among whom we live, how are we to recall the spirit which has been withdrawn, to restore the

dust which has returned to the dust as it was? It has been asserted, indeed, that the dead, who are removed to a distance from us, may be depicted with a truer and steadier hand than the living among whom we mingle. The past is still and statuesque, no doubt; the present noisy and con-But this happens because the multiplicity of motive and emotion which distracts the mind in the one case, has been withdrawn from the other; which is saying in effect, though in varied phrase, that the amount of evidence on which to rest a judgment, or sustain a conclusion, is relatively less The past is still, because it is dead; sufficient. the present is alive, and therefore it disturbs and perplexes. But as it is about the motives of living men that we desire to be informed, to argue that the past may be described with greater precision than the present, is merely to confess a weakness and impotency in the imagination. effort is, in fact, far more difficult, because the materials are less abundant, because the prejudices are more matured and inveterate, because we no longer meet the men face to face, and the swift instinct of recognition cannot pronounce with the same decision its involuntary verdict.

So far we have been urging what may be called the negative or sceptical side of the argument. But it will not do to stop here. The argument has an affirmative side likewise, and in it lies the moral of the discourse. For the difficulties we have dwelt upon only serve to show what is too often forgotten—that the historic is a high and distinctive faculty.

The poet is born; the historian, it is supposed, may be put together like a machine. The hypothesis is not quite without warrant. A thorough acquaintance with his material, diligence, industry, study, are indispensable to the historian. indeed, with a style symmetrical and graceful, if somewhat destitute of colour, and with an intellect whose cool logic marshalled with admirable plausibility the stubborn passions of the partisan, has contrived, notwithstanding loose demonstration and scanty research, to secure for his theory of the progress of the English monarchy a permanent place in its literature. But antiquarianism alone cannot make a trustworthy historian. The antiquarian indeed, wearing out his eyes over his beloved and musty manuscripts, appears to lose more quickly than other recluses

> the sense that handles daily life, That keeps us all in order more or less.

Now we find one discussing with immense solemnity and erudition whether it was a pippin that Eve ate in the garden; another, anon, writing an interminable treatise to demonstrate that Lot's wife was changed into a pillar of Glauber salts, and that Dr. Dryasdust, who inclines to Epsom, is a dolt, an idiot, and a knave.* It is impossible

^{* &}quot;And therefore," says Francis Lee, M.D., in his Essay on the Metamorphosis of Lot's Wife, "the true, natural, and genuine sense must be, not that any monument was raised over this unbelieving woman, how durable soever, and by means ordinary or extraordinary; nor that her body was made salt by a real Transmutation, Transelementation, of Principles; nor that the like portion of essential salt therein contained was by multiplication and organization built up into the form of a human body; but that all bodies in the

that such men can use their learning effectively, or as an instrument to elucidate the truth. intimate acquaintance with the documentary and contemporary records, with the letters which the leaders wrote, and with the speeches which they made, is not unimportant; but only to a seer like Mr. Carlyle do these emit the flashes of light which reveal the inmost heart of the hero. Act of Parliament which has been repealed for generations is a dead letter in literature as in law, until a capable student, like Mr. Froude, rescues it from neglect, and discovers an invaluable commentary upon the relations between the king and his parliament, and between the parliament and the people, in the preamble to a condemned or obsolete statute. A knowledge of the social habits and the political literature of our ancestors, such as Lord Macaulay possessed in perfection, is not to be despised; but the most minute details about their dress or their amusements will only go a little way to shew us what they were. The value of such materials, apart from the picturesque effect which a judicious employment of them produces, is not intrinsic, but depends upon the eye

world being produced from salt (as may be demonstrated), and salt being properly as the pillar of nature in the whole visible creation, and the primæval principle of solidity and durability, there was such a sudden induration of all the Parts of her body, without doubt, from the Abundance of the nitro-sulphurous particles penetrating the same throughout, that she became like a statue; and was her own monumental pillar, or a standing Mummy, to be seen by every one; not unfitly called salt, as both being of the same durable nature with it, and likewise originated from it." And much more to the same effect.—Dissertations, etc. By Francis Lee, M.D. London, 1752.

which regards them. How, then, shall we distinguish the faculty which marks the historian? How is he to interpret the motives of a departed age?

To trust to the judgment of contemporaries, or to the judgment posterity has pronounced, is, as we have seen, to trust to a broken reed; and, in deciphering the worn hieroglyphics, we must ultimately fall back upon the finer sense which spontaneously discriminates the character of the A man unendowed with this capacity, when turned loose in a historical preserve, wanders about blindly and aimlessly, committing the most flagrant blunders, finding the great man in the knave, the booby in the hero or the martyr. But the writer who is true to its admonitions must always be substantially accurate; upon the whole, right in his estimate. With unconscious precision he separates the chaff from the wheat; he appropriates the grains of true metal while he casts the pebbles and sand aside; he looks with his mind's eye upon the grave faces of the dead, and they attract or repel him as the living do. This—call it what we choose, sympathy, insight, imaginative recognition—is what we must finally have recourse to in historical inquiry; for all other means—antiquarian nicety of research, the statutes at large, contemporaneous opinion, even the recorded sayings and doings of the men themselves—are only means to an end, and are in fact calculated to deceive and mislead where the historic instinct is wanting.

The "historic instinct" is thus a very rare and

noble gift, involving indeed the very highest faculty of the mind; for, except a man can create, he cannot restore. The mason may rebuild with the old stones the spire which has been cast down; but it requires a man of original and independent genius—a man who, by an imaginative logic, can put together the shattered fragments, and the scattered debris—to prevent the restoration from becoming a monument of incongruities. Every stone that the mere mechanic lays sins in some way against the original design, and he unwittingly displeases and offends because the old building was grander and more massive than the mind which is now at work upon it, and which cannot extend in the right direction the broken line, nor curve the ruined arch to the antique comeli-The man who is to rebuild the minster should be the man who, when need is, can erect a minster of his own; and the historian who rehabilitates in flesh and blood the dry bones of the past must be not only an antiquary but a poet.

And a sound analytic faculty implies not only an imaginative, but a moral guidance. I have said that we cannot undertake to arrange or classify men under the superintendence of any general principle. "General theory" would be perhaps the better expression; for unquestionably we must contrive by some means or other to reach the central point in a man's character—the axle on which it revolves, the mainspring which impels and controls it. Unless we gain this, however clearly we may decipher certain of his motives, however lucidly we may explain his

career at certain points, we will still grope and stumble in the dark. Without the key which unlocks the hidden machinery and explains its design, our work must be essentially guess-work. Now I think it is those writers whose sense of what is absolutely righteous or unrighteous is most intense and wakeful, who are able to refer capricious feelings and motives that seem from the surface fragmentary and unconnected to some invariable principle of morals, who make the truest, most just, and most merciful judges of To them the chaos of mental disorder, which distracts the casual observer, becomes orderly, the inconsistency is explained, the contradiction reconciled. Firmly grasping this plummet, instead of vociferating in blind horror and amazement "rogue" or "villain," they can shew where the lawyer, the soldier, or the statesman fell short, and why he fell short. To the possession of this faculty the vividness, distinctness, and profound feeling of reality which Mr. Maurice has imparted to the "kings and prophets" of the old Hebrew commonwealth, which Mr. Kingsley has imparted to the Pagan and Christian teachers of Alexandria, are mainly to be attributed. "The law was the same to them as to us, and a thousand years cannot quite separate them from us. These are human beings, owing obedience to certain divine commandments, often wandering grievously away from them, sometimes striving to practise them, once or twice in their lives nearly succeeding." When he comes to his work in this spirit, when he is made to feel that human life is girded by an eternal law, the historian finds his work marvellously simplified.

No historian, therefore, can be really great, who is not at once a poet and a moralist. It is because Lord Macaulay was not gifted with the higher faculty of either that, notwithstanding his dramatic temper and admirable tact, he will fail to retain a first place in the ranks of English his-Mr. Carlyle, uncouth as his handiwork torians. appears when compared with that felicitous art, and that finished rhetoric, is an infinitely truer student of life, an infinitely more reliable observer of the past. The Historian of the Commonwealth is to the Historian of the Revolution as the Iliad of Homer to the *Iliad* of Pope. Lord Macaulay, though he wrote poems, was not a poet; Mr. Carlyle, though he has written none, is. The one paints with inimitable grace the face; the other, though in a somewhat rough way, dissects the heart. The one is superficially accurate and picturesque, the other is true to the core. The one stops outside, and, microscope in hand, examines with immense attention the coat; the other pierces into the life, noting the coat also as it passes, and finding something even there which had somehow eluded the eye of the other. For in contrast with the accuracy of the imagination, the literalness of an unpoetic intellect, even within its own field, is always comparatively sterile and unexact.

"The poet and the moralist." The poet to explore the hearts of men and women; the moralist to explain their actions by the laws

which God has established in his universe. And tt cannot be doubted, I think, that the higher and purer the imagination is, the higher and purer is the truth which it reaches. A great gulf, for insiance, lies between the Lancelot of our great English poet, and the Lancelot of popular romance and monkish chronicle. Guided by a fervid imaginative and moral sympathy, Tennyson has read his perilous secret, and we know that he has read it truly. His picture of the Arthurian knight—flos regum Arthurus—is a profound psychological study, intensely sad, because intensely true, and intensely true, because intensely human. He may have erred; it is possible that he may; but the chances are a hundred or a thousand to one that he is right. There can be no mistake about the literal truthfulness, the absolute obedience to the moral laws which always and everywhere preside over human conduct, which mark that marvellous study. And what a study it is!

Lancelot is still the noble gentleman, "the great knight, the darling of the court." In his kindliness there is no disdain, in his "utter courtesy" no deceit; he is "mirthful, but in a stately kind;" generous, so that he cares only to strive with the strong; touched with a "sacred fear" of the excellence of womanly purity, when the maiden stands beside him in the "dewy light;" obedient to high emotion and heroic impulse; tender in manner and nature; of a great humility; understanding the full worth of the Master he has wronged, and ever eager to abase himself, and

vindicate the stainless virtue and truer nobleness of the king.

And in me there dwells

No greatness, save it be some far off touch

Of greatness to know well I am not great;

There is the man.

Yet a plague-spot has eaten into his life. The bitter curse of repented, but unforsaken, sin is upon him. "The sweet image of one face" haunts him, "making a treacherous quiet in his heart," or maddening him with unfruitful remorse. He is a solitary and a homeless man. There never can be wife of his, "for woman's love save one he not regarded," and she is Arthur's queen. He hates the deadly spell which binds him; his anguish drives him into wastes and solitudes; he groans aloud, stricken by shame, and tortured by incurable passion; but the evil clings closely to him ever, the sore festers his body, and corrupts his life.

The great and guilty love he bore the Queen, In conflict with the love he bare his Lord, Had marr'd his face, and mark'd it ere his time.

And then the lily-maid of Astolat comes to him—to the great and tarnished knight—and stands beside him in the dewy dawn, and offers up to him the incense of her young life. Had he seen Elaine in her tender beauty, in her virginal purity, before he quaffed the fatal draught, before the rich, brilliant, passionate, luxurious soul of Guenevere had intoxicated him, draining his heart dry, and incapacitating him henceforth to enjoy any purer or simpler breath of love—what might have been!

And peradventure, had he seen her first, She might have made this and that other world Another world for the sick man; but now His honour rooted in dishonour stood, And faith unfaithful kept him falsely true.

Ah, that "peradventure!" that "might have been!" But if the "peradventure" is instinct with such fatal loss, with such indestructible woe, how closely does it become us to scan the framework in which the life has been set, the mischances which have distorted its growth, changing the fair simplicity of nature into crooked and cross-grained shapes, ere we venture to return a verdict. it is the man who realizes this most keenly, who feels how fearfully difficult it is to winnow the truth out of a man's life, and how terrible the responsibility upon him to speak the truth of the dead, as well as of the living is, who will be least inclined to use harsh words or vivid colours, who will hesitate to condemn the infanti perduti of history, who will be urgent to leave them rather unsentenced and in hope, to the mercy which Guenevere craved, and which alone can fully extenuate or explain their guilt.

> If ever Lancelot, that most noble knight, Were for one hour less noble than himself, Pray for him that he 'scape the doom of fire, And weep for her who drew him to his doom.

Yes, Lancelot, untrue to his God, unfaithful to his king, is noble to the end, and when he dies they can write upon his tomb that simple and touching farewell.

We have had lately many restorations of the Arthurian Romance—its resurrection, in fact, is

one of the notable points in the art and literature of the time—but few more subtly conceived and executed than those by Mr. Morris. They are as characteristically modern in sentiment and feeling as Mr. Tennyson's; yet the two pictures are in many respects curiously dissimilar. The few exquisite lines in which the passion of Lancelot and Guenevere is depicted, will enable us to analyze the elements out of which this dissimilarity arises, and to compare the effects which the old romance has had upon two purely poetic, but very differently constituted, minds of our own time.

It is by Arthur's tomb—for that great battle in the west has been fought and lost, and all the goodliest fellowship of famous knights has been unsoldered for ever—that the lovers meet for the last interview. Years have passed away, and the radiant beauty of Guenevere does not burn now as it did once. She is living in retirement with the nuns of Glastonbury, and her lord, King Arthur, lies outside, "by the thorn-tree wherefrom St. Joseph in the days past preached." Lancelot, sad and troubled, has been riding all day across the Wiltshire downs, drawn along by one unforgotten face, and knowing only

that where

The Glastonbury gilded towers shine
A lady dwelt, whose name was Guenevere.

Recollections of the old time crowd thickly upon him as he rides,

And she would let me wind Her hair around my neck, so that it fell Upon my red robe, strange in the twilight With many unnamed colours, till the bell Of her mouth on my cheek sent a delight

Through all my ways of being; like the stroke Wherewith God threw all men upon the face When he took Enoch, and when Enoch woke With a changed body in the happy place.

Once, I remember, as I sat beside,
She turn'd a little, and laid back her head,
And slept upon my breast; I almost died
In whose night-watches with my love and dread.

There lily-like she bowed her head and slept,
And I breathed low, and did not dare to move,
But sat and quiver'd inwardly, thoughts crept,
And frightened me with pulses of my love.

I did not sleep long, feeling that in sleep
I did some loved one wrong, so that the sun
Had only just arisen from the deep
Still land of colours, when before me one

Stood whom I knew, but scarcely dared to touch, She seemed to have changed so in the night; Moreover she held scarlet lilies, such As Maiden Margaret bears upon the light

Of the great church walls, natheless did I walk.

Through the fresh wet woods, and the wheat that morn,

Touching her hair and hand and mouth, and talk

Of love we held, nigh hid among the corn.

And as he rides through the lonely night, and the vision dims, a passionate longing seizes him,—

If he might but touch That Guenevere at once!

He reaches the thorn-tree in the early dawn, and, sick and faint lays his head upon a tomb, "not knowing it was Arthur's." Guenevere, too, had been yearning all night for the appointed meeting, until with the day a sudden remorse has seized her,—

the thing grew drear In morning twilight, when the gray downs bare Grew into lumps of sin to Guenevere. She prays to the Lord Christ in her agony, and when her maid summons her—"By the tomb he waiteth for you, lady"—she goes to meet him, white but resolute. The interview that follows is intensely pathetic. She has vowed to Christ that this unrighteous love shall be put away:

"I am very sorry for my sin; Moreover, Christ, I cannot bear that hell; I am most fain to love you, and to win A place in heaven some time."

So she rakes up the old passion relentlessly, though it tears her heart. Fearlessly she speaks bitter words to the man whom even yet she cannot help loving. She stabs him with a white face, and a quivering hand. She has resolved to be strong and harsh and repellant, and even his piteous reproaches do not move her:

"Lo you her thin hand,
That on the carven stone cannot keep still,
Because she loves me against God's command,

Has often been quite wet with tear on tear,
Tears Launcelot keeps somewhere, surely not
In his own heart, perhaps in Heaven, where
He will not be these ages."

But his tender humility and unresisting hopelessness all but vanquish her at last.

"They bite me—bite me, Lord God!—I shall go mad,
Or else die kissing him; he is so pale
He thinks me mad already, O bad! bad!
Let me lie down a little while and wail."

"No longer so; rise up, I pray you, love,
And slay me really, then we shall be healed
Perchance, in the after time by God above."

Then, as if stung by an adder, she starts up to her

feet, and in a passion of terror at the weakness which is assailing her, stabs him yet more cruelly. By the banner of Arthur—

Banner of Arthur, with black-bended shield, Sinister-wise across the fair gold ground—

she will tell him how he has broken his knightly vows, how disloyal he has been to his lord:—

"Banner, and sword, and shield, you dare not pray to die,
Lest you meet Arthur in the other world,
And, knowing who you are, he pass you by,
Taking short turns that he may watch you curl'd,

Body and face and limbs in agony,

Lest he weep presently and go away,

Saying, "I loved him once," with a sad sigh.

Now I have slain him, Lord, let me go too, I pray.

[LAUNCELOT falls.

Alas! alas! I know not what to do;
If I run fast it is perchance that I
May fall and stun myself, much better so.
Never, never again! not even when I die."

LAUNCELOT, on awaking.

"I stretched my hands towards her and fell down,
How long I lay in swoon I cannot tell;
My head and hands were bleeding from the stone,
When I rose up, also I heard a bell."

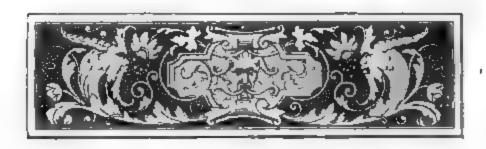
There are some wonderful lines in this passage—scarcely excelled by anything in *The Idylls*, a strange subtle sweetness and infectious grace—like Guenevere's own.

"But after all," quoth Reginald, as he wound up the argument, "intensely human as all this is, we yet walk blindly and in the dark. The most searching, and penetrating, and brilliant faculty can but faintly reproduce these passionate forms, or restore that faded life. Arthur, and Guenevere, and Lancelot, are *dead*, and the best we can do will not bring them alive again. Let us be warned in time. Carpe diem. Let us make the most of the sunlight while we may; for they are fools who confide their fame to history, and seek atonement in the grave."

It may be that he is right in the main. A prudent scepticism, not rash, but critical, is perhaps the safest frame of mind. We see through a glass darkly. The past is an enigma. The voices of the dead are faint and distant. History will not become a branch of positive science till the secrets of all hearts are loosed, till at eventime it is light.

So—there sits the Sphinx; silent, unmoved, inscrutable, confessing neither to bliss nor woe, awaiting the judgment of God.





PEOPLE WHO ARE NOT RESPECTABLE. A LAY SERMON.

Alas! alas!

Why all the souls that were, were forfeit once;
And He that might the vantage best have took,
Found out the remedy! How would you be
If He, which is the top of judgment, should
But judge you as you are? O, think on that
And mercy then will breathe within your lips,
Like man new made.

MEASURE FOR MEASURE.

THIS season of the year, when, through habitual communion with the moor-fowl and the heather, we are enabled to contemplate, in a calm and emancipated spirit, the conventional respectabilities, which become so overpowering, and personally momentous on our return to town—this season we devote to the literature which is not "respectable." We wander through the birken glens with half-a-dozen literary vagabonds at our heels; we drink our smuggled whisky and water beside the camp-fires of questionable gipsy settlements; and we even profanely enjoy at times the

guerilla warfare which the light-headed gentry carry on against the True, and the Good, and the Beautiful of modern civilized life. Evil communications corrupt good manners. At such seasons we dare to question the honesty of our statesmen, and the piety of our divines.

The Right Honourable Benjamin Disraeli is a godsend to the Bohème de lettres. He is the first of the race who has been trusted with the exchequer. The god of red tape in religion and politics hates this Free Lance with its whole He has defied the respectabilities, fought them on their own ground, and routed them ignominiously. He can afford to scoff with impunity at the leader of the Puritans, in the face of Puritan England. Noble lords await his pleasure, and wealthy commoners—according to Eastern metaphor—tie his shoe-strings. The Chancellor of the Exchequer is a grave and solemn personage; very magnificent in the dignified deference he pays to the assembly which he rules, and to the beef-eaters of old England who sit behind his back. whole affair, indeed, a farce at bottom? How can the politics of our puny societies affect the chief who has stepped out of the desert? Talk of consistency or of inconsistency to the Bedouin sheik whom you have caught, and tried to tame! "What's Hecuba to him, or he to Hecuba?" Tory, Whig, Radical are only names; but the conduct of war, of Government, of men, are realities that may satisfy the ambition even of a Hebrew King.

No man has been more abused than the

Chancellor, and few men has the abuse of the English press harmed less. This is mainly because a false issue was taken, and was known to be taken. The public—at least that discerning part of the public which is always more powerful in the long run than the press or the senate—felt that the standard by which he was tried was neither satisfactory nor exhaustive. No doubt he was inconsistent, and inconsistency is death to your ordinary statesmen, to your Peels, and Greys, and Russels. Consistency is an article of their creed, and by their creed must they be judged. But to this wandering athlete, frankly and ostentatiously avowing that it was power, and power only that he desired, and that the weapons by which he was to obtain it were to him matters of profound indifference — to one thus regarding political creeds only as the tools, the dice, in the superb gambling for government—such a test could not be applied with effect. Had it been said that truth was good, and that error was evil, and that those "who sell the truth to serve the hour, and palter with Eternal God for power," will ultimately knock their heads in a painful way against the universe, some result, assuming their theory to be correct, might perhaps have been But we are a nation averse to first obtained. principles, and there is neither truth nor error known to the Constitution, but only Whigs, and Tories, and advanced Liberals. So that when the accused in effect answered, "I know that I am inconsistent, and I mean to remain inconsistent until I am the ruler of a nation, where decent imbecility

is the condition of public life, after which, God willing, we will set up the kingdom at Jerusalem,"—What more could be replied? Success being our test of merit, the fact that Mr. Disraeli is at the present moment the leader of the gentlemen of England, has silenced his critics in a peremptory way. They admit that they have been mistaken. He has not yielded to their tests, he has baffled their analysis, and they now lick the dust at his feet with as much humility as if he had been born within the Garter.

Such a phenomenon as Mr. Disraeli is a sore blow to the English decencies. Yet it may be admitted that in most of the other departments of life these continue to flourish with undiminished vigour. The class of people who are not respectable is still as large as ever. If the word "adventurer" will soon cease in political society, from the force of one great example, to imply anything disrespectful or slighting, it is still a charm of evil import everywhere else. No one perhaps quarrels very seriously with this phraseology, except the people of improper tendencies and doubtful connections, who suffer from its operation; but there is even yet considerable looseness in our application of the test—a looseness which in this age of accurate science it might be not altogether inexpedient to get rid of.

"If we only reflect on it, Madam, we are all naked under our clothes," was the startling truism of a great authority—a truism which has been expanded into a quaint system of philosophy by our most profound and thoughtful humourist. The

clothes, closely considered, do not make the man, and a society whose social distinctions are regulated by the tailor and the upholsterer, has not penetrated very deeply into the true relations of human life. Standing upon the rippled shore of the infinite sea, and listening to the mysterious converse which it holds with the overhanging and attentive night, one is tempted at times to philosophize in a dangerous way. "All men are equal-all are brothers in the sight of the Supreme. A crown, or a coronet, or the escutcheon of a belted knight, is very passable in its place, but after all the human heart, the human intelligence, underlies, and as a man is brave, or wise, or large-hearted, must be his rank among the divine respectabilities, must he endure or perish utterly. The amount of cloth in his coat is not conclusive evidence either for him or against him. Certain honest, goodhearted fellows I know can never contrive to keep themselves in decent raiment—are always out at the elbows. One, whose massive brow and chiselled eyelids you, Madam, who adore the antique beauty, have noted not unadmiringly, has somehow the knack of saying and writing (when he can get the paper) the strangest, most notable things with the most simple and natural ease. Where he gathers these "jewelled words," puzzles his well-to-do friends amazingly, seeing how shabby and threadbare the outer man always is. Another, whose thoughts on religious matters seem to me to be, like Heine's, the result of a monomania, or local insanity, whom the world has publicly condemned as an atheist and unbeliever, who cannot speak of

our religion without a sneer, or its Divine Founder without a jest, is never coarse, or intolerant, or savagely uncharitable on any other topic, is at heart one of the bravest and gentlest of those martyrs—

Who did accomplish their desire, Bore and forbore, and did not tire, Like Stephen, an unquenched fire.

The sentence of excommunication which we pronounce on this man, rests, perhaps, on more solid grounds than that which we pronounce on But are the grounds really different the other. when analysed? The life of either is noble and pure; each is a thorough and genuine man; but we cannot afford to admit this, because the material and spiritual vestments are somewhat tattered. In effect it may be broadly asserted that our society never looks at the man, but only at the clothes or the opinions. Nobleness, and purity, and the perfect sacrifice of the life, are dust in the balance. We know that the vagaries of the human understanding are infinite. mortal life, if truly lived, is made up of failures and contradictions. On all these the sleek British public, which never possessed an opinion in our time which it had honestly worked out for itself, comes down with remorseless severity. The man's coat is shabby—he is not respectable—let him be accursed. Ah! my dear public why is his coat Is it because he is abhorrent to the shabby? Eternal Destinies, or because he has a wife and other mortal appendages at home which the brave heart is trying to feed and keep warm and honest? Of course, you never thought of making "an imprudent marriage." You are the gentleman who writes in the Leading Journal, that God's earliest commandment cannot be obeyed on less than £ 1000 per annum. But our shabby friend does not know anything of your prudent political economies. Little Cousin Annie, with her shy fawn-like glances, won the rough honest heart while yet it beat under the boy's jacket, and when her mother died, what could he do but take her to his own hearth, in trust that He in whom is every good and perfect thing—wedded life among the rest—would feed them and their little ones, as He feeds the ravens and the sparrows? And though the coat be somewhat threadbare, the heart is not a bit impoverished; but has gathered love, and pity, and reverence, and grown rich with the years. He works to-day, and takes no thought of the morrow. He knows that his children will not lack bread; are they not of more worth than many sparrows? We need more, and not less, of this wise improvidence; but until, by some valiant bright-eyed Saint George, the demon of respectability be cast out from among us, the best of our young men and women will continue to grow up into hard, one-sided, calculating machines, on whom the most potent reformatory influence that Christianity recognises—the family life—is never permitted to act.

The bread-and-butter test of respectability has no doubt its advantages. If a man will not work, let him starve; and the popular logic concludes that the man who starves must thank himself for the pass to which he is brought. That conclusion of course absolves society from any further responsibility. A man who is ruined by his own folly and wickedness has put himself beyond the pale of our charity,—the cardinal Christian doctrine, if we recollect aright.

An ardent poetess has affirmed of her nation that, in it

Each soul is worth so much on 'Change, And marked like sheep with figures;

and we do shew, certainly, an immense respect for what is plainly styled in the Statute-book of Christendom, "the root of all evil." When a man has made his twenty thousand pounds, he is said to be "getting on in life;" when he has made his million, he is an entirely successful member of the human family, who may balance his books when he likes, and retire into eternity with éclat. He has turned his talent to account; he has understood and mastered the grand purposes and issues of life; he has speculated to the best advantage with the body and soul that were given him. We cannot understand how one who fails in the race after gold can merit our admiration; how one who lives in poverty and hunger, and dies without a shilling, can be held to possess any one admirable or noble quality.

Once, no doubt, it was different; another standard of value was at one time current. That coin passed as genuine, however, only in the dark ages of philosophy and history. Then, instead of feeling that they were shipwrecked unless they "got on" in the world, men were content to

"lose it," and to avow that in doing so they did not lose but gained. Nay, so powerful was the infatuation, that it was formally embodied in an institution. Devotees, as we call them, abandoned themselves to poverty and suffering; journeyed continent to continent, not to gather "barbaric pearl and gold," but to wash the feet of the disciples; and when spent in the work, when the body could no longer sustain the pressure of want and disease, died in pain, and were eaten of worms, without the satisfaction of knowing that they had saved a sixpence. And yet these men did not acknowledge that their essay in life had failed; some of them even proclaimed that they were great gainers; and kings, and princes, and nobles—the very best society in that age—were sometimes found who agreed with them.

That was all very well then, it is retorted; but this is the nineteenth century. We are no longer, like children, insanely generous and unselfish. We have cut our wisdom teeth, and gained discretion with our years. Body and soul, says the practical man, revolving some dubious expedient, body and soul must be kept together; says it, by no means unreasonably; for the men we have read of who felt at length that by no possible means could they any longer honestly maintain the connection, and so died, and were blessed,—lived in the olden time.

"I know not what you may think," said my paradoxical friend Reginald to me the other day, "but I am glad that so many of us fail." A career of uninterrupted success or respectability is the strongest argument against the

immortality of the soul. If you get all, and a good deal more, than you deserve here, what farther do you want? But when life has been a total wreck, when you have been utterly discomfited, are you not forced to conclude that there must be reparation somewhere—that the Immortals will "make it up" to you afterwards? And it is for this reason that I consider a book like Self-Help essentially obnoxious. Its so-called "moral" is that if you exert prudence, judgment, and industry, you must succeed. "Consider the lives of these men—they waited with patience, they worked with a will; the opportunity came, and they made themselves great and famous. Do you likewise, and you will succeed as they did." But no mention is made of their obscure contemporaries, who were quite as patient, and quite as courageous, and who failed. I confess that the biographies of these men, if they could be written, would be much more interesting to me than the biographies of their more illustrious brethren. The life of the barrister who was not made Lord Chancellor, the life of the curate who did not become Bishop of London, the life of the soldier who died a plain lieutenant, are lives that I should like to hear a little more about. Failure, which is such a very common yet intricate lesson to learn, surely deserves its Plutarch no less than victory. Let us elect a laureate to celebrate defeat! The victor passes on laurelcrowned to the Capitol; but he leaves the best men huddled into a trench on the battle-field! The real hero of the fight lies there. A smile

from Mary on her scaffold is worth all the ribbons and garters ever bestowed by the prosperous Elizabeth. The energetic precautions of Tullus Aufidius (whom some have called a traitor) were rewarded with success: so let the colours be hoisted and the drums beat; yet one is glad to know that Coriolanus had time to tell him to his face that he was a liar—

> Measureless liar, thou hast made my heart Too great for what contains it.

Numbers of men of course fail who ought to fail, and men succeed who do not merit success; but I believe that upon the whole the moral of these unwritten biographies would be, "Neither prudence nor vigilance nor virtue can win success. The best men succeed; the best men fail. Be not elated if you win; be not humiliated if you are beaten." Nay, it is quite possible that they might enforce a still wilder paradox. They might prove that failure in this world requires finer qualities than success; that the coarse and vulgar virtues are those that wear best and tell most effectively in life. I do not say so—I do not think so, indeed; but on the other hand, it is neither fair nor honest to tell our boys, "John Smith was steady and industrious, and he was made Lord Chancellor: if you are steady and industrious, you will be made Lord Chancellor," without telling them at the same time, "Jones was as good a man, but he never gained a single Depend upon it that the hack language guinea." on this subject is exceedingly injurious. It teaches, explicitly or implicitly, the most absolute selfishness. It makes success a virtue; it makes failure a crime. It prevents us from estimating the true worth of actions, and forces us to ask with Hudibras,

For what in worth is anything
But so much money as 'twill bring?

Failure is *not* always defeat—visible success *not* always real victory, or the cross of the malefactor could never have become the honoured ensign of Christendom.

"And so the subject would broaden into vaster relations. Unless the seed die, how can it be quickened? Unless you suffer defeat sometimes, you will never learn the heartiest and the kindliest wisdom, you will never grow truly humble and thankful, you will never know the need of charity, and the power of love. Of all things in this world, a career of unbroken triumph is the last that a sinful mortal should pray for. No man is strong enough to suffer uninterrupted and unmixed success."

It is Sydney Smith, I think, who remarks in one of his charming letters, "We all know that we must keep down our feelings and endure the spectacle of triumphant folly and tyranny." Poor Reginald! No doubt he finds it difficult to keep down his feelings as he witnesses the spectacle of triumphant respectability. So to encourage him, I repeat to him what the wittiest and wisest of parsons has said elsewhere—"A few scraps of victory are thrown to the wise and good in the long battle of life." "Perhaps they are," answers the

heir of the De Morevilles, "only they are a doosid long time coming."

One of the great social teachers of the age upon the whole, perhaps, at this moment the ablest man we have "raised"—has recently, in a remarkable address to the operatives of one of our great cities, defined his views of the duty which a British citizen owes to his neighbours and his nation. The Civis Romanus is to shake the dust from off his feet, leave his country to the doom it merits, and, among the virgin forests of the West, eat, drink, and sleep at his leisure. "Every man for himself, and the Devil take the hindmost." This is the new philosophy to which the accumulated experience of a thousand years has brought In it the old Pagan notion, that a man may righteously sacrifice himself for his nation, has obviously no place. We used to fancy, in occasional moments of weakness, that the finest legacy the Roman State bequeathed to the world, was the memorial which it raised to him "who did not despair of the Republic." To the erection of this statue Mr. John Bright, in a vigorous and pungent epistle, would have declined to contribute.

Three books are lying beside us at present which have suggested these observations, and which may serve to illustrate them—the Autobiography of the Countess of Landsfeld, the Abbé Domenech's Mission in Texas, Henrich Heine's Pictures of Travel—all three notabilities with certain visible peculiarities of their own, and all three to be classed with those we call disreputable, except perhaps the first. Madame Lola appears to be

accepted, at least, as a great moral and æsthetic teacher by our cousins across the Atlantic. this less imaginative England, however, the Dame aux Camelias, the Catholic curé, and the German atheist, continue to figure in the same category. They are the waifs and strays, and cast-aways of society, beings who have no place in our appointed order of the universe, improper characters for whom there should be no toleration. And the bond by which we bind such apparently incongruous people together is that no one of them, when estimated by the clothes standard, is—respectable. is the cast-off mistress of a dethroned potentate; Domenech is a greasy friar, an agent of the Propaganda, whose normal condition is dirt and fleas; Heine a riotous German student, who in religious matters is little better than a Greek idolator. Sothe railroad to Avernus has become a very favourite comparison with our popular preachers since the introduction of steam—so we paste the same label on each of them, book them for the abyss, and leave them on the incline.

As regards the Countess Landsfeld we have no desire to interfere. She will probably be tried and condemned by a larger code than that we are now discussing. The judgment of the world in this instance coincides, it may be, with that of the Higher Powers.

And yet who knows? This wild unkempt Irish girl, with the passionate Spanish blood in her veins, may have had much to try her. Fatherless, worse than motherless, cast with her own resources alone upon the world, it is not alto-

gether surprising nor inexplicable that she should have fallen. The wonder is, perhaps, that she should have remained as she is. It must have needed a woman of immense vigour and resource to have come with the same comparative cleanness through so miserable an experience.

But here our sympathy ends. The temple of Aphrodite Pandemos, like the jail or the lazar-house, is one of those terrible institutions endowed and maintained by the sores of society. We war not with the inevitable. We do not expect that the Social Evil can be written down by a satire or an epigram. Its proportions are much too colossal for our light literature. We are content to pity, and in the meantime to acquiesce. But when this institution purports to become reformatory, when it mounts the platform and assumes the functions of the public moralist, flaunts its paste jewels and dirty rags in the face of the nation, then the feeling is changed into one of repugnance, nay, almost of horror.

We understand that Lola's lectures in America were largely attended by American ladies. Nor if we have perused the report of what was said and resolved at the recent convention held in New York, need we perhaps be much astonished thereat. Her moral code certainly does not go further than theirs, and she claims for her sex no wider liberty than that "sacred and important right of woman" which is (in the striking words of one of the resolutions) "to decide for herself how and under what circumstances she shall assume the responsibility of maternity." Yet we confess

cousins listening to the cunning wisdom of Lola is not pleasant to our minds. There is something exceedingly repulsive in the picture of this faded dame explaining to youth her meretricious experiences; describing with the utmost candour and naīveté the devices of her voluptuous toilet; and exhibiting to her attentive audience the curious cosmetics which are used for their traffic in beauty by the Traviatas of the Empire. It is too bad, indeed, to attribute the tricks of the grisette to St. Germains and the Elysée; but even if the account were authentic, could such a lesson have been learnt from such lips without pollution?

The lectures, if genuine, are no doubt the work of a remarkable woman. Nor are the traits which they disclose altogether unpleasing; clever, daring, graceful, courageous; immense shrewdness, readiness, and adroitness of intellect, with a force of will and character that might have made her a Jeanne d'Arc or a Charlotte Corday, had her life been written on the white side of the leaf. As it is, it has made her at least energetically disreputable. There is about Lola, too, a supreme impartiality; she has no principles, no resentments. Then she is quite unselfish. She shews the profuse lavishness and easy generosity of the grisette. The unctuous moral sentiments which intercept the reader are perhaps the least pleasing feature; they have the tinkle of the cymbal. Yet she appears to have felt a real passion for freedom. Liberty was, in the beginning, a pretty toy for her amusement, but at last it excited her keenest sympathy when it was opposed by the Jesuits, whom she hated. Europe must have been in a strangely volcanic condition when the doings of such a woman could earn political significance.

Life is read in very different ways. To one it is a Book of the Farm; to another a Commercial Dictionary. An Indian estimates it by the number of scalps at his girdle; a lawyer by the number of briefs in his bag.* To others, and these do not constitute an inconsiderable fraction of our best society, the writing on the wall is so exceedingly indistinct that they never know exactly what to make of it. These may be encountered in our cafés, in our club-windows, in our polite assemblies. They have places in the Circumlocution Office, and extensively conduct the diplomacy of the empire. That notwithstanding the muddle and bewilderment of the whole affair, these gentlemen should continue to preserve an

^{*} There is an admirably graphic description in M. Du Chaillu's *Travels*—almost too good to be true—of the "standard of value" current among his black friends on the Camma:—

[&]quot;A man's wealth is reckoned here, first, by the number of slaves he owns; next, by the number of wives, and then by the number of chests. Chests are used to secure goods in. Therefore chests have come to be the synonym here for property of this kind, as banks indicate money with us. Now chests, to be secure, must have locks, and therefore locks of American make are in great demand all over this country. Native locks are not very secure. But as locks secure chests, so keys are worn in great numbers as the outward symbol of ownership in locks, and chests, and property. And I found shams even in Goumbi, for several of my Camma friends had a great array of chests, most of which were empty; and, indeed, it is the mode to collect as many boxes as you can, no matter if you have nothing to put in them."—Adventures in Equatorial Africa, by Paul B. du Chaillu, p. 254.

appearance of the most imperturbable composure, may be reckoned the crowning triumph of our civilization.

Lola reads life, however, with perfect distinct-Her theory is not at all perplexing. world is a theatre where men and women assemble; where the men try to deceive the women, and the women to be deceived with as little risk and scandal as possible—the memorable point being the grace with which mutual ruin can be effected. is a carnival—not of the most respectable kind. It is human nature viewed from the Traviata stand-point. The heroes are seducers; the heroines—like those of certain modern novelists— Social intercourse in general may are courtezans. be described as an intrigue of immense propor-Universal history is only the record of gallantry. The kings of Christendom are mainly memorable on account of their mistresses, knighthoods of Europe have been instituted to commemorate the virtues of historic Aspasias. Beauty is the current coin in the erotic exchequer, and the means by which it may be preserved from the tear and wear of time, and dissipation, constitute the most valuable elements in a woman's The milk-bath in which the Parisian education. beauty bathes of a morning is rivalled by one of "tepid water and bran," "which is really a remarkable softener and purifier of the skin." Madame Vestris plastered up her face each night in a paste mask to keep off the wrinkles of old age, and Continental ladies wear, when asleep, "thin slices of raw beef," to give freshness and brilliancy to their

complexions. Such is the view of human life at which Madame Lola has arrived. Lastly, she writes her own biography, because in this society, if it exist, she has no doubt, as she claims, become "an historic presence."

Enough of the rouge and tinsel; let us turn, for change, to another form of the disreputable. Perhaps no class of men are looked upon with less toleration in this country than those who differ from the orthodox in religious controversy. The exhaustive commination in Tristram Shandy—Maledictus sit in totis compagibus membrorum, à vertice capitis, usque ad plantam pedis—is weak in comparison with the anathemas which the Tomahawk launches against all those who do not accept the Low Church explanation of the universe. It is impossible for us to hold any communion with a heretic. Anathema Maranatha; let him be accursed. And yet at the present moment we claim to be an eminently liberal nation!

For eighteen hundred years Christendom has been engaged in construing the maxims of its Founder. To what purpose has it studied them?

Charity is the foremost of the Christian graces, and the sins of the nineteenth century are understood to be cloaked by its capacious mantle. We may be avaricious, sordid, or base, but we are eminently liberal. Thumbscrews have gone out of use, and are preserved in a rusted condition in antiquarian collections. Instead of pulling the teeth of the children of Israel, we put them into Parliament. We have at least varied the punishment.

In so far, certainly, as the formal expression of the spirit of cruelty and intolerance through coercive legislation is involved, we have improved. But is the heart changed? Are we more liberal, or only more latitudinarian? Are we less selfish or only less earnest? We do not stone people for peccadilloes, as the Jews did, but do we never cast missiles of a figurative kind at our erring brothers and sisters? "Let him who is without sin among you cast the first stone." The test was efficacious when originally tried, and the woman went home unharmed. If our English habit of stoning sinners with hard words and hard thoughts be not quite abolished, it may be because we are able to stand the test. Those who are without sin are no doubt entitled to continue the practice.

Yes, it is quite true. Though we have carried various Catholic and Jewish Emancipation Bills, we still need an act for the cultivation of charity. Two hundred years ago Milton wrote the Areopagitica. It is a monument to liberty, as noble and as lasting as the assembly to which it was addressed. But though we have conformed to its precepts, we have not been fired by its spirit—the spirit of unhesitating trust in truth, and profound respect for the rights and responsibilities of the individual conscience.

The grave and stately warning of the Puritan moralist is not yet out of date. To us as to his contemporaries, his rebuke comes home. It need have occasioned no astonishment had Milton and Cromwell been inquisitors. They belonged to an age which was intolerant of intellectual dissent.

Their contemporaries had not discovered that the rights of Christian freemen had been vindicated by Saint Paul. The tolerance of Cromwell is quite as startling as the tolerance of William of Orange, and the temperance of Milton's character scarcely less surprises us. Between the severe and arbitrary scheme of doctrine which he worked out, with poetic fervour indeed, but with Puritanic precision and angularity, and the elastic liberty of thought and speech which he claimed for his countrymen, a great gulf seems to lie. But no words of hesitation or timidity weaken the argument, or the invective, of that brave speech. He is no faint-hearted partizan. He loves liberty with a perfect love, and he responds with lover-like loyalty to her lover-like appeal,—

So trust me not at all, or all in all.

It is this frank confidence that we miss now. We have abolished legislative disabilities, but we have lost our faith in freedom, and we are continually falling back upon weak and timorous expedients. We are afraid to say—"Let good and evil grapple together; let men learn temperance by temptation; without the liberty to err there can be no virtue worthy of the name;" and so we shut up the public-house, and fancy that we are rearing a nation of sober men. Some of Milton's contemporaries entertained a similar ambition. They were content to cherish a "fugitive and cloistered virtue, unexercised and unbreathed, that never sallies out and seeks her adversary, but slinks out of the race where that immortal garland is to be

run for, not without dust and heat,"—with what result we know. But at least, if we are to inaugurate a policy of repression, let us do it manfully. Let us tell the world clearly that we have taken the morals and the manners of the people into our keeping, that we intend to make them pure by the police magistrate, and devout by Act of Parliament. "Not on compulsion, Hal," said John Falstaff; nor did John Milton love the "excremental whiteness" we approve. The stern Puritan, the grim Republican, satirized its apostles in language whose mellow ridicule, whose breezy laughter, whose delicate scorn, have seldom, we think, been rivalled in "our English."*

"No music must be heard, no song be set or sung, but what is grave and doric. It will ask more than the work of twenty licensers to examine all the lutes, the violins, and the guitars in every house; they must not be suffered to prattle as they do, but must be licensed what they may say. And who shall silence all the airs and madrigals that whisper softness in chambers? The windows also, and the balconies, must be thought on; these are shrewd books with dangerous frontispieces, set to sale; who shall prohibit them, shall twenty licensers? The villages also must have their visitors to inquire what lectures the bagpipe and the rebec reads, even to the

[&]quot;Our English," as Milton affectionately and proudly calls his mother tongue; "rather, as I hope, for that our English, the language of men ever famous and foremost in the achievements of liberty, will not find servile letters enow to spell such a dictatory presumption Englished."

balladry and the gamut of every municipal fiddler; for these are the countryman's Arcadias and his Monte Mayors."

The question of practical toleration is seriously one of pressing importance. It may not be a matter of life and death now, but it is still one of every-day comfort. In many circles you would incur more odium if you told its members that you read "Maurice" and "Jowett," and believed them to be good and honest men, than if you picked their pockets. Holy hands are lifted in pious horror; an inquisition is held upon the conditionof-your-soul question; your opinions, which you have always supposed to be at least harmless, charitable, and good-natured, if nothing better, are pronounced "unsound" and "unsafe" (words evil import) by the assembled saints; and you are then solemnly tied to the stake and burned—fortunately in effigy only. The intercourse of ordinary life is thus needlessly embittered. The peace of families is disturbed. The " elect" of the household regard the "reprobate" with an arrogant and offensive pity. They will try to pray for them perhaps, but the prayers are the prayers of a caste—always resting on the Pharisaic assumption, "we thank thee that we are not as this man is"—and there is no virtue in such petitions. The victim may indeed retreat from the family and the sect, sever local ties which daily become more oppressive and unmanageable, and calmly appeal to a wider tribunal. But the rent is very trying to mortal nerves; the heart-strings sometimes crack in the venture. We know one

man, indeed, one of the brightest and cheeriest of living men, broadly liberal and catholic, yet withal utterly in earnest, who has been able to do it; to sacrifice what are called "the best prospects," that he might, in the freedom and integrity of his soul, preach what he believes to be God's truth; and we have seldom felt more bitter indignation (one cannot afford to be often indignant, the sæva indignatio wears the system too much) than when we have heard him spoken of in terms that could not decently be applied to a convicted thief, by people, whose narrow heads, and narrow hearts, supplied the only apology. These things are very sad, very disheartening; more especially when we reflect that this vindictive social persecution is obviously quite unfruitful; quite unfruitful at least as it seems to us, though it may be that it serves, in a blind way, some wise benevolent end, and to "larger, other eyes than ours" appears in a very different light. Has it not been said from the beginning, "I come not to send peace, but a sword?"

We have called this persecution, as practised among ourselves, vindictive; but we confess that we had formed no adequate notion of its intense bitterness until lately. The Bishop of Exeter has opened our eyes, and shewn us that, like the hate of the Florentine poet, it pursues its victims from this world into the next. "It is necessary," said his Holiness the other day when consecrating a section of the churchyard of Tiverton, "that there should be a division, a palpable line of demarcation, in order that the Church may bury its dead apart from those who do not die within its pale. There may

be in Tiverton, or elsewhere, a certain number of infidels, whose place of sepulture should be distinct from that intended for those who die in the Lord. It is a glorious thing for the Church that blasphemers and infidels are not permitted to lie in the same ground with Christians. There is a line to mark how far they may trespass, and when they reach that spot there is the gentle admonition, 'Thus far shalt thou go and no farther.'"

That death levels all distinctions has been the theme of the Pagan, as well as of the Christian, Many of the noblest sermons on record, moralist. from Job to Horace and Holbein, have celebrated the austere impartiality of the grave. In it, the preacher asserted, all men meet on equal terms, and the dust of the slave mingles without chal-"There the wicked lenge with that of his lord. cease from troubling, and there the weary be at There the prisoners rest together; they hear not the voice of the oppressor. The small and great are there, and the servant is free from his master." But the Lord Bishop of Exeter is plainly of a different mind. He, at least, will rot in strict exclusiveness. No unclean dissenter shall touch the hem of his shroud, or witness episcopal decomposition. His Lordship is at length appeared. These are the men who removed the Catholic disabilities, who repealed the corn laws, who admitted the children of Israel into Parliament, who had doubtful views upon Church rates, who attacked him in the Times, and ridiculed him in Punch; but he has got the whip-hand of them now. If but a handful of the unclean clay wander across the

limits prescribed by law, it will be met by a gentle admonition from the right reverend worms—" Thus far shalt thou go and no farther."

"Quid ultra tendis?" asks the antique moralist in his vein of scorn and pathos—

Quid ultra tendis? Æqua tellus Pauperi recluditur Regumque pueris.

Aye, what more would you have? Is it not enough? Does not the impartial earth suffice you?—Not so. The aqua tellus may serve indeed for the ignoble obsequies of a Pagan poet; but a Christian bishop, in the gorgeous Elizabethan periods of a still quainter moralist, "is a noble animal, splendid in ashes and pompous in the grave, solemnizing nativities and deaths with equal lustre, nor omitting ceremonies of bravery, in the infamy of his nature." And to such an one, of course, it never occurs that the spirit which has gone to God, who gave it, may fitly be left to the judgment of His tribunal, and that before the rash and impotent verdicts of mortal men rises up the divine admonition, "Thus far shalt thou go and no farther."

That dear, admirable, blessed Thomas Hood has furnished unspeakable comfort to many mutely indignant souls. Whenever we feel particularly savage we read his Ode to Rae Wilson, Esquire. It ought to be printed in letters of gold, and hung above every church-door in the kingdom. How the keen wit fits into the keen logic! how the one enforces and sends home the other! It is altogether the most admirable protest that has yet

been made in this country against the unchristian exclusiveness and the unchristian vindictiveness of our religious public.

Heine, one of the religious disreputables, was a sort of Hellenic atheist, a mocker from his boyhood to his death, who does not seem to have known what the religious sentiment meant. Such a man is a strange and somewhat lamentable curiosity, to be treated with pity rather than anger. Shelley was a "mad angel;" and no one can fail to see that, on one side of his head and heart, Heine, too, was perversely insane. But Heine and his "bright-gleaming sorrow," Heine with his ringing wit and his delicate esprit, his childlike simplicity, his Oriental imagination, and his magnificent bursts of eloquence, is, after Goethe, perhaps, the most notable man of his nation. Cannot we afford to do him bare justice at least? Why must we fall into hysterics, and burn him for an atheist? His atheism must have come to an end by this time, Heaven knows! but the strange vivid genius in the man was implanted by his Maker, and does not deserve to be lightly or scornfully cast aside.

Some of our friends indeed are inclined to adopt a sort of compromise in his, as in certain other cases. They do not wish to be compelled entirely to cast away these wild, fragrant, fantastic flowerets of the imagination (our language is not subtle enough to describe the gorgeous riot of this man's mind), but they would cut the scoffer and the mocker out of them. It will not do. If you begin to cut and carve and dissect, you spoil the

whole picture. What becomes of the gossamer which rainbows the morning light when you put your hand on it? The man's tone is the man himself—with Heine more than with most men. He cannot help mocking: the moment the heart gets too oppressed, the moment the voice gets too broken, whenever the lips begin to twitch and quiver, he must laugh. But, after all, we are not Milk is now rather an infantile beverage for our tastes. It is perfectly true that once, wrapped in an amazing quantity of linen raiment, we were borne about in the arms of an alarmingly hardfavoured domestic, and we are quite ready to thank Heaven that we were not then required to walk on our own legs. But we are men now-men who can drink strong wines to a reasonable extent and not be drunken; and for that also we do not fear to thank Heaven. And so we are willing to take Heine and several other men and women as they are; content to believe that if they were better they might not be so good; that some of the rich, subtle, aromatic virtue, might be lost in the dressing. Our honest, clear-headed, soundhearted English gentleman, with agricultural tendencies, is a capital working member of the human family; but only when watching the mechanism of a mind like Heine's do we learn to know that we are "fearfully and wonderfully made."

Have you read any of his marvellous poems on "The North Sea?" Read them, as we have done, upon its shore, and you will find that, softened and saddened by the dying sunset, they are the very incarnation of its stormy spirit. A

man who can tell us what "the noise of many waters is, and great sea-billows are," is a man to be protected and cherished, even though he should go a little crazy now and again. And, believe us, Heine paid for his insanity; his books, with all their wit, are often profoundly mournful. They are very sad at heart. Listen to this—dirge, shall we call it? admirably rendered by the American Leland:

Yet merrily beams the May;
And I lean against the linden
High up on the terrace gray.

The town moat far below me
Runs silent and sad and blue;
A boy in a boat floats o'er it,
Still fishing and whistling too.

And a beautiful varied picture

Spreads out beyond the flood,

Fair houses and gardens and people,

And cattle and meadow and wood.

Young maidens are bleaching the linen,
They laugh as they go and come;
And the mill-wheel is dripping with diamonds,
I list to its far away hum.

And high on you old gray castle
A sentry-box peeps o'er;
While a young red-coated soldier
Is pacing beside the door.

He handles his shining musket,
Which gleams in the sunlight red;
He halts, he presents, and shoulders—
I wish that he'd shoot me dead!

But to-day we are not in a critical mood; we are not estimating Heine's genius; we only ask

charity and commiseration—what you are bound to render to the meanest sinner—for this bright and blinded Son of the Morning, who had, like the rest of us, his own burden to bear.

Heine has a better chance, however, of toleration in this country than Emmanuel Domenech. He is only an atheist, while the latter is a Roman Catholic. English charity is intensely national. We do not hang Roman Catholics as Elizabeth did; we have tied our hands up, but we have tied neither our thoughts nor our tongues, and few Englishmen or Englishwomen can understand that a papist may be a good Christian, and an honest man. But the Abbé Domenech is manifestly both: we must account as we can for the anachronism.

There is no doubt a good deal of religious sentiment in our society. We have got a "religious public;" we have got publishers who print religious works, and we have got people who read them—chiefly of Sundays. But our religion is very much like the wit of the last century—it is the creature of sects and coteries. It is Calvinism or Arminianism, the Confession of Faith or the Thirty-Nine Articles, Whitfield or Chalmers or Edward Irving. Only a remnant can honestly say with Mr. Tennyson,

Our little systems have their day;
They have their day and cease to be;
They are but broken lights of thee;
And Thou, O Lord, art more than they.

A creed is not religion; it is at most its husk; the Architect of the universe is above and beyond

all definitions; and the man who works out in honesty and humility the work given him to do, gains a better understanding of his Maker's nature than the most perfect system of formal theology can give him by itself. A true life is better than a true creed—though the highest excellence can be attained only when the two are united, when the creed fits in, and adjusts itself, to the warmed and vigorous heart of the man. We feel the truth of this very frequently—it is impossible to avoid feeling it, and these unpretending inevitable lessons are of consummate use—in reading the life of this Roman Catholic Abbé. Fragments and excrescences of a religious system, which might hurt an idle and speculative recluse, fall off and do no harm when, heated and glowing with exertion, he works at his work with all his might. The good in the system abides with him and strengthens him; the salse is shaken off, as Paul shook the viper off his hand into the fire. Exercise keeps body and soul healthy and welladjusted, preserves the tone of the mind, and deprives the noxious influence of its evil power. To a man galloping day after day across boundless prairies, infested by malign and bitter enemies, that he may administer the rites of religion at some remote and solitary death-bed, it can make little difference whether he administer them according to the ritual of England or of Rome. The eternal truths which they represent are the only objects that retain any value to that lonely sufferer; controversies about the form and the husk sink into insignificance, and are stilled in the

presence of the great reality; and the missionary unconsciously disengages from his system whatever cumbers, impedes, or distracts—whatever does not stand the test of hard and imperious use. Trickery and artifice are detected; spontaneously laid aside; and the system, though in name the same, is cleansed and purified, alike to him who gives, and to him who takes.

The Catholic religion is the religion of form. To our taste its forms are overloaded and meretricious. We have inherited the severely simple instincts of our English ancestors. Yet let us not judge harshly of those who derive health and nourishment to their spiritual life from the employment of material imagery. Only a rash and unhistoric mind can affirm that idolatry must be the consequence of a dependence on form. The most thoughtful men have cheerfully recognised the impressive sanction which it offers, and the safety with which it may be invoked.

Leave thou thy sister when she prays,
Her early Heaven, her happy views;
Nor thou with shadow'd hint confuse
A life that leads melodious days.
Her faith thro' form is pure as thine,
Her hands are quicker unto good;
Oh, sacred be the flesh and blood,
To which she links a truth divine!
See thou that countest reason ripe
In holding by the law within,
Thou fail not in a world of sin,
And ev'n for want of such a type.

And if this craving be felt in the midst of the crowd and bustle of society, we can easily under-

stand how consolatory the religion of Catholicism must be to the dweller in the wilderness. alone the forms of his faith must become infinitely expressive to his heart and his imagination; must often supply to him the solace of a human companionship. The Protestant believes that his God is present with him on the prairie and in the forest; but the belief is vague, dim, inarticulate; the Catholic, on the other hand, wandering among the great solitudes, stumbles on the little Cross by the way-side, and clasps it as he would clasp the hand of a brother. There is a wise and happy benevolence in such a creed, which we—who feel perhaps too strongly, that the Infinite dwells not in temples made with hands, who resent, perhaps too keenly, the separation of the secular and the sacred in a life whose every motive rests in God—are not entitled to rebuke or scorn. ever inaccurate, when measured by the haughty policy of the triple crown, Dryden's eulogy may be reckoned—

A milk-white Hind, immortal and unchanged,
Fed on the lawns and in the forests ranged:
Without unspotted, innocent within,
She feared no danger, for she knew no sin.
Yet had she oft been chased with horns and hounds,
And Scythian shafts; and many winged wounds
Aimed at her heart; was often forced to fly,
And doomed to death, though fated not to die—

yet we need not hesitate to own that a Church which has endured for a thousand years must have addressed itself, not unwisely, to some very true and powerful emotions, "deep seated in our mystic frame."

These suggestions we put forth simply to enable the reader to approach this book by the Abbé Domenech without allowing his mind to be biassed by the natural associations of the Protestant natural and reasonable enough, perhaps, when applied to the state of feeling existing among the priests and members of the Catholic Church in Europe, but false and misleading when applied to it as it exists in the wilderness. On the book itself it is needless to dwell at length here. merely the old martyr story transacted in a strange land. A nation embedded in ignorance and sin; the young missionary, simple, childlike, a noblehearted gentleman, striving with all his soul to take away the falseness and foulness of their lives, and to restore them to the likeness in which they were made; and doing all this without any thought of self, without any hope of worldly reward, under the habitual pressure of hunger, sickness, and nakedness.

These are some of our equivocal acquaintances—the least reputable among them being probably the unshaven, hungry-looking friar, who has scarcely enough of raiment to cover his dirt decently. Only the other day we met on his way to the House of Lords, and seated in the neatest brougham one sees in the Park, a bishop of the Catholic and Apostolic Church. The man is a good man; a hard-working, honest man; loved by his own Church, and not even obnoxious to dissent; but, somehow, the spectacle seemed like "a satiric touch" upon the words of the head of the

one requires, indeed, to get away from these affluent priesthoods to the disreputable classes of the clergy—to impoverished Texan missions, and ragged Emmanuel Domenechs—to feel sure that that Divine life has not become quite a dead letter in this world. So that the clothes criterion, after all, does not work exhaustively. A man may occupy a decent position in the universe, even though his raiment and his rations, nay, even his opinions, are not quite à la mode. Perhaps, all things considered, the best society that has been organised of late is that "For the relief of those whom the world hates."

This is a lay-sermon; now, in conclusion, for the practical application. And yet what more can be said? Out of this thing of shreds and patches which we call life, out of these jarring discords and ravelled skeins, what web can be woven? No distinct pattern, we may be sure; no coercive creeds, no arrogant infallibilities. Those who require such must be disappointed. The wise are they who on their knees—" Stretch lame hands of faith, and faintly trust the larger hope."





On Nonconformity.

A PLEA FOR LIBERTY.

There be delights, there be recreations, and jolly pastimes, that will fetch the day about from sun to sun, and rock the tedious year as in a delightful dream. What need we torture our heads with that which others have taken so strictly, and so unalterably into their own purveying? . . . How goodly, and how to be wished, were such an obedient unanimity as this! What a fine conformity would it starch us all into! Doubtless a staunch and solid piece of frame-work, as any January could freeze together.

AREOPAGITICA.

THE Lay-Sermon we have just heard was meant to suggest a reply to the question—In what spirit ought we to treat the Nonconformist? That is a question of social toleration—a question that may and must be answered by each of us individually. But two questions still await consideration; in the first place—How is the State; and in the second place—How is the Church, to treat Nonconformity? Both are practically important, but the latter, it cannot be disguised, has become, and is daily becoming, more difficult, pressing, and embarrassing.

Mediæval devotion or ambition turned the world into a huge spiritual camp. The State might then not inaptly have been represented with a sword in one hand, and a Bible in the other, like a fighting bishop. The Old and New Testaments formed, in a sense, the statute-law of Christendom. Every citizen was a soldier in this army. heretic was a deserter, and desertion was punished with military rigour. The idea of a righteous dissent was unfamiliar and unwelcome. Freedom of belief, latitude of discussion, were incompatible with military discipline. So that a religious test naturally became the test of civil capacity. Unless a man believed in the Apostles' Creed, he was not qualified to serve—still less to command. And if not qualified to serve or to command, what was the use of him in this world? He was obviously quite out of place in it. There was no post which he could fill. So the State, in almost every case, undertook one of two things. The Nonconformist must be either converted (when to prevent a relapse he was commonly burnt in the end), or summarily ejected. A Dissenter was a traitor to the commonweal.

This mediæval unity presented an imposing spectacle. It was once of real use. When the church was contending against the barbarians, it animated missionaries and crusaders. A tolerant and sceptical society could never have exhibited the same union, strength, and passionate force. But when it ceased to be the form which a military and political church naturally assumed, when an artificial conformity was required from the members

of an essentially civil state, it became a source of weakness, hypocrisy, and rottenness. Cowardly or sluggish men were content to conform, though they did not believe. Brave men resisted, and were burnt or otherwise disposed of. So that when the church fell, it was as corrupt as the empire had been. In fact, the demand for an absolute unity, except under peculiar and highly exceptional conditions, must always produce questionable fruits. Men's minds differ as their faces differ, and we cannot cut them all to the same pattern. When we try to do it, we violate that great natural law of diversity, which is "the order of the world."

It is this law, that, after a fruitless effort on the part of the Puritans to establish a new unity, a unity negative rather than positive, and which consisted chiefly in forbidding everything that the liberally corrupt Catholicism had enjoined, modern society may be said to have appropriated.

It is unnecessary to enter upon a consideration of the reasons which justify the adoption of this law. It rests upon such grounds as these—That the conscience cannot be compelled—that persecution only hardens error—that the stiffness of a Dutch parterre is less admirable than the freedom of nature—that the finest lights are shed by the unfettered imagination—that the virtues which wear best are those which are nurtured in the open air—that the self-restraint which is taught by freedom is more powerful than an enforced obedience—that men, with all the sins of manhood upon their heads, are yet, upon the whole, nobler and

better beings than the child who has not been tempted by sin or tried by sorrow, or the ascetic who has fled in terror from the trial—that a secluded and white-robed piety is lifeless and colourless when compared with the glow of manly resistance, with the glory of manly triumph, nay, even with the sharp pang of a not inglorious defeat—that spiritual slavery is as odious as physical, and as fatal to the instincts of liberty—

Generous shame,

The unconquerable mind, and freedom's holy flame.

This is the modern law of diversity, which is founded upon a truer sense of unity than the Mediæval Catholicism, because it recognises that "God fulfils himself in many ways," and that in most men, principles, and systems, there is a certain residue of good. The mediæval religion called itself catholic because it was physically omnipotent, not because it was spiritually liberal. A catholic church upon the modern principle ought to be precisely the reverse—indifferent to temporal dominion—indifferent to verbal distinctions,—but claiming fellowship with truth, and goodness, and holiness, wherever found.

This being to a certain extent the law of our society—a law calculated to produce the highest possible type of society,—we have to ask ourselves, whether practically or legislatively, whether in the church or in the state, we fall short of it? Do we tolerate nonconformity up to that point where nonconformity, with safety to the church and to the state, can be tolerated? "With safety," because self-preservation is the *suprema*

lex, and no state or church is bound, or can be expected, to destroy itself.

It scarcely admits of question that our municipal law has become thoroughly tolerant. No doubt one or two scraps of the early religious narrowness still adhere to it; but these, it is evident, will be quietly disposed of before longwhenever they are found to become practically inconvenient. If a man, for instance, is an unbeliever, the law virtually allows him to be pillaged out of his property, by making him, on account of his want of religious belief, an incompetent witness. Such a disqualification is a perfect anomaly, and does not bear to be defended. Only two arguments can be adduced in support of the exclusion, and neither is tenable. It cannot be defended as an appropriate penalty, for the state is not entitled to punish a man for his belief; nor can it be defended on the ground that an unbeliever is necessarily a liar, because we know that unbelievers are ordinarily quite as truthful as their neighbours, or at least as thieves, and murderers, and other criminals, whose testimony is now admissible. or two similar anomalies may yet be detected, but, speaking generally, it may be asserted that the law has ceased to attach any civil disabilities to religious or speculative nonconformity, and that it is only when practical nonconformity becomes essentially tyrannical, and really dangerous to the public peace, that it reluctantly interferes.

The other, and the more important question, relates to the measure of nonconformity that can be tolerated in a national church. The issue is

one which theoretically affects the layman and the ecclesiastic alike, but the ministers of religion are the only real sufferers, and it is in so far as it concerns them that we are anxious to examine it.

The amount of freedom of opinion which we will be disposed to extend to the ministers of religion, will of course depend very much on the conception we have formed of a national church. A national church, in the largest sense, is the development of the devotional side of the national nation is commercial, commercial mind. tribunals are created; a nation is literary and scientific, royal societies and guilds of literature are created: a keen sense of order and law in a nation creates a powerful executive, and a powerful magistracy. The church, in like manner, is the organ of the national piety. It is an institution which is created by, but which at the same time fosters, ministers to, and develops the religious life of the people. If this definition be accurate, and we are convinced that it is, then it follows that such an institution—maintained it may be out of the public purse—should be devoted to the service of the public, and that any limitations of caste, or of doctrine, when not absolutely indispensable, are inconsistent with its design, and with the purposes for which it exists. Any condition which prevents any religious citizen from becoming a minister (and thereby partaking of the emoluments to which he would otherwise be entitled), or a member (and thereby partaking of the privileges which communion confers), is, prima facie, injurious and indefensible. A clear necessity alone can

justify its retention. Is there then to be no limitation? Are men of all opinions, and of no opinions, to find shelter within the sanctuary? To such a question the reply is obvious. A national church cannot be permitted to lose its representative character. The national church of a Christian people must remain distinctively Christian, just as the national church of a Mahometan people must So far there remain distinctively Mahometan. must be limitation, but no farther. When churchfellowship is made to depend on minute niceties of doctrine, discipline, or ecclesiastical etiquette, a profound mistake is committed. What should we think of the Mahometan government which permitted those citizens only who believed that Mahomet went to the mountain, at a particular hour, on a particular day, to minister in its mosques? Any test which in a Mahometan country separates Mahometans, or in a Christian country separates Christians, from the church which the country maintains, is injurious to the influence, and repugnant to the spirit, of an Establishment. A national society (which has no right to indulge in religious dilletanteism) is thereby taken from the nation, and handed over to a sect.

What degree of conformity then—to apply these observations to the case before us—is or should be demanded from the clergyman of the Church of England? It is a pity perhaps that the question has been mooted; but it is now too late for repentance; we are in the midst of the mischief. A large and influential party, at the risk of producing a convulsion in the church, appears

obstinately bent on carrying the conflict to the last extremity. It is war a l'outrance that is proclaimed. At such a time all those who know the value of the stake are bound to bestir themselves. Every one who has the interests of liberty at heart is concerned in a wise and prudent settlement of this question; but unless due precaution be observed, it would seem that there is every probability that the settlement may be quite the reverse, —rash, intemperate, and despotic.

The position which is generally adopted may be briefly indicated. Whenever any office-bearer in the church ventures to express, or is supposed to hold, an opinion which is not in conformity with the construction which his opponents attach to its official documents, he is told with great asperity, "It is your clear duty to quit the church. You are an impostor if you remain where you are. You have subscribed the articles, you are ruled by the canons, and unless you believe every line of the formularies, you cannot honestly continue to hold the emoluments of the church."

The view is simple; it may be defended by many rather obvious arguments, and it is a powerful one, for it makes an appeal which most Englishmen can understand. It says, "If you are honourable men, you will leave us; you are guilty of fraud if you remain."

Fraud is a hard word; and we confess that we are always rather suspicious of the honesty of those who use it much. At any rate, its use often indicates a mind of coarse fibre, inferior logical capacity, and imperfect sympathy. It is so much

pleasanter to cut, than to untie, the knot! Whenever one of those delicate and involved moral enigmas, which in this indifferent world meet us on every hand, rises up before, and demands judgment from, an intellect of this class, we may be pretty sure of the kind of answer it will receive. An inveterate partizan must be intellectually indolent, unwilling to weigh evidence, and unable to sift probabilities. We need not wonder, therefore, that he should habitually tax his opponents with falsehood, and detect a fraudulent design in any argument which the sluggishness, or natural weakness of his reasoning faculties, prevents him from But the patient searcher after apprehending. truth will not be frightened by ugly words, nor deterred by vague accusations.

What, then, is the precise obligation which a clergyman undertakes when he subscribes the articles? What does he promise to do, or to leave undone? What does subscription import?

We are not going to enter on a critical examination of the various articles, canons, statutes, and declarations, which bear upon this point. That has been done recently, very fully and very ably. The result of the examination may be stated in a sentence. When a man subscribes the articles, he is understood to "assent," "allow," or "acknowledge" that they "are agreeable to the Word of God;" and he undertakes not to impugn them as "erroneous" or "superstitious." But the 20th Article declares, that "it is not lawful for the Church to ordain anything that is contrary to God's Word written;" thereby implicitly asserting

the Church's liability to err, and the right of private judgment, which, as Protestants, its members possess. The Scripture is made the standard: the articles, in so far as "agreeable to the Word of God," are the law of the Church; but it is not lawful for the Church to ordain, nor consequently for its members to accept, "anything that is contrary to God's Word written."

What, then, is the value and extent of the obligation which the framers of the articles designed to impose? It is clear, no doubt, that an ecclesiastic who has subscribed the articles is not entitled publicly to impugn them: and it may also be admitted that subscription implies present consent to the proposition that they are agreeable to the Word of God. But does he promise more than this—does he promise to continue always in the same frame of belief? Has he shut himself out from the liberty to inquire and to judge? Is the Reformed clergyman alone excluded from the exercise of the prerogative which the Reformers vindicated—the right of private judgment? And if in the exercise of this liberty his opinions undergo modification, is he morally bound to resign his benefice, and to terminate his connection with the National Church? Does his promise require him to do this?

It may be that it does: but before coming to the conclusion that such was the intention of the founders of the society, it may be well, in the first place, to look with a little more attention at the position in which this construction places the English clergyman.

Let it be granted that by subscription a minister of the National Church declares his assent to every word and syllable contained in the formularies of the church. He binds himself to them —but for how long? Can a man bind himself, or can you, with any show of decency, require him to become bound that he will retain, for the rest of his life, the opinions which he held when a lad at college? Such a view is wilder than any burlesque—such an obligation would be contra bonos mores-immoral to impose, immoral to accept. We may safely assert that such a result could not have fallen within the contemplation of the framers. A layman in the exercise of his Christian liberty passes through a vast variety of spiritual states, and yet remains to the end, without offence or danger, a member of the National Church. But the clergyman, when he has once "taken" the articles, undergoes a species of petrifaction—he becomes a fossil thenceforth to the day of his death. The rich and invaluable lessons which experience teaches must not be learned by him; he must close his eyes upon the growing light; his moral and intellectual nature, "like Joshua's sun at Ajalon," must come to a full stop!

But the answer is still,—"Resign. Let him resign, and then he is at liberty to believe what he likes." But is it quite clear that he can resign to this effect? No resignation can deprive him of his ministerial status—can re-invest him with the privileges of a layman—can enable him to enter the House of Commons, or render him eligible for

the Treasury Bench, or the Woolsack. though he may, he cannot cease to be an ecclesiastical person, incapacited for civil employment; yet, according to the popular theory, he has solemnly undertaken to believe, as long as he continues to be so, that is, till the day of his death, every line of the articles! The only way in which it is possible to reconcile these discrepancies, and to justify the founders of the Church in requiring subscription, is, to suppose that they intended subscription to signify something quite different. would seem to be the true explanation. Subscription was not a measure designed to secure absolute uniformity of opinion in matters of religion. It was a measure designed to prevent scandal, and to preserve order in the church. The subscriber was not to assail or impugn in public the body of doctrine which the articles contained,—an obligation similar in form and kind to that which is undertaken by the teachers in the public schools of Scotland.

This appears to be the only safe or feasible explanation. It is the only one that in any measure meets the practical difficulties of the case. One of these difficulties has just been considered. There is another closely connected with it. If subscription import an obligation to believe every word of the formularies under pain of resignation, then it follows that the clergyman is bound to resign whenever he experiences the faintest hesitation concerning any doctrine on which they touch, however trivial and subordinate that doctrine may be. Can a National Church, can any church, continue

to hold together on such terms? The convictions of men are as diverse as their constitutions. On half-a-dozen vital questions the majority of Christians are agreed; but how many are agreed upon all questions, great and small? It implies a profound ignorance of human nature to expect a dead level of belief in a nation. Now, the rational explanation avoids this difficulty, as well as others of a similar nature. A clergyman is not forced to resign although he may differ from the doctrine of the articles in one or two unessential particulars. He is himself the judge of what is essential, and what is not essential. And for this reason. A perfectly honest man may not feel bound to impugn a doctrine to which he does not assent. The difference may be so slight, the question so trivial, that he may not feel called upon to open his lips on the subject. The difference of a hair's breath, or the most fantastic distinction without a difference ever hatched in the brain of a schoolman, becomes of course terribly important when a man is sworn at the altar to believe it; the oath endows it with virulent life. But when no such pledge has been extorted, he may pass by on the other side with impunity. It concerns him not. Whenever he discovers, however, that he is at issue with the formularies on some vital matter, whenever he feels that he can no longer remain silent, whenever he is irresistibly impelled to denounce what he regards as pestilent error, then he must of necessity resign, and if he does not do so voluntarily, Dr. Lushington may possibly compel him.

That is the position of the English churchman. So long as he knows that he differs on a matter of detail only, and not on one of those vital points which drive him into active dissent, he is not morally, as he is not legally, required to resign.

But such a construction holds out a premium to dishonest reticence? We do not think that it does. It must be presumed in this inquiry that all clergymen are honest; and for the very sufficient reason that the law cannot touch the dishonest. A dishonest clergyman may laugh in his sleeve at the whole thirty-nine articles en masse; but as long as he does not directly and publicly impugn them, the Church's discipline cannot be directed against It is absolutely powerless in such cir-With his case, therefore, we have cumstances. nothing to do. We have to consider those only on whose honour we can depend; and no one, except the partisan, would willingly drive such men out of the Church, merely because, though substantially Christian in doctrine and practice, they are unable, upon certain subordinate points, to follow the arbitrary arguments of King Henry, or the circuitous logic of Queen Elizabeth. men may be safely and properly allowed to determine for themselves the point where, and the time when, separation becomes a matter of conscience. It is not an unblushing effrontery, but a morbid sensitiveness, that we have most to dread. Many minds of this class are too apt to raise a question of pedigree into a matter of faith.

There is another consideration which favours this eminently reasonable construction. The law

regards with disfavour any conditions, except in so far as indispensable, that are unfavourable to liberty. It will be disposed to treat as null and void all obligations tending to shut the nation out of the National Church, and to confine it to a caste, that are not obviously essential to its existence, and that are not capable of clear and precise defi-It may be doubted, moreover, how far such restrictions (restrictions destructive of the life of a really national society), even when formally adjected, can become obligatory on its members. Our jurisprudence is apt to disregard similar restrictions in every case where the consent of the individual is not clearly instructed. Even a deliberate consent will not always suffice. A railway company may sell you a ticket, on the condition that they are not to be responsible in case of accident; but this will not protect them from liability, nor bar you or your representatives from prosecuting your claim. Public carriers must carry the public safely, or take the consequences; and neither a voluntary, nor an extorted consent, will relieve them from the legal results of mis-carriage. The cases are not exactly similar of course, yet a public religious society stands somewhat in the same position. A national Christian church may import an article from the Koran into its formularies, or it may make a profession of Paganism a title to communion, but such conditions are clearly inconsistent with the duties which it has undertaken to discharge, and it may fairly be doubted whether they are binding upon its members, or whether implement of them could be enforced.

We have said that the clergyman must be the judge of when, and under what circumstances, he should cease to remain in communion with the Different men will judge differently. A sensitive and specifically logical mind is intolerant of trifles; the earliest sensation of doubt will drive But we must not be surprised if it into dissent. many linger long, and look back wistfully, before they snap the chords that bind them to the Church where their fathers worshipped. Such men will feel that, be their speculative opinions what they may, they are at heart loyal sons of the Church; that they cannot separate themselves from her without becoming aliens and castaways; and that their separation will injure a cause which they love, and to which they wish well. These emotions are natural and most justifiable; and the men who experience them in their intensity will not quit their brethren,—to them separation will not become a conscientious duty,—until avital divergence has been conclusively established, and they have ceased to hold the distinctive doctrines of the Church.

We have hitherto argued the question upon the assumption that a specific scheme of Christian doctrine is contained in the articles. Such, no doubt is, and always has been, the view of violent partisans. But the assumption appears to be inconsistent not only with the words of its formularies, but with the historical character of the Church of England. A lay critic may be pardoned if he decline to enter the theological arena; and if he prefer to accept the interpretation which

history furnishes. The historical commentary is the most valuable of any. A creed, or a confession, indicates the opinions of its framers only; but the records of three centuries cannot fail to shew in what sense the nation has determined that a creed or a confession is to be read. An article as well as a law may fall into desuetude. tudo can interpret, if it cannot abolish, the statutes. The framers may have meant one thing, but the original intention is modified by the current of Such a power of adaptation is indisdecision. pensable to an historical institution. The oldest of living bishops will hardly venture to affirm that he attaches the same sense to certain of the canons —that, for instance, relating to demoniacal possession—which the men who wrote them attached. Though a prosecution under the seventy-second would be laughed out of court, there can be no doubt that it still forms a part of the written law of the Church, and that Queen Elizabeth's divines were quite in earnest in what they said about Tried by this test the answer is con-For certainly if the history of the Engclusive.

* Shakespeare's Measure for Measure is a sound piece of political philosophy; and his view of the impolicy of reviving obsolete enactments, and of exacting an unwise conformity, may be gathered from various passages.

But this new governor.

Awakes me all the enrolled penalties,
Which have, like unscour'd armour, hung by the wall
So long, that nineteen zodiacs have gone round
And none of them been worn; and, for a name,
Now puts the drowsy and neglected act
Freshly on me;—'t is surely for a name.

We sometimes fancy that it is not unwise to have at the head of

lish Church means anything, it means this—that no exclusive aspect of Christianity, neither Arminianism nor Calvinism, neither Anglicanism nor Puritanism, is embodied in her formularies. The articles, in Burnet's words, are "articles of peace, not to be contradicted by any of her sons"—not articles of strife—not articles of exclusion. She is not a conventicle established by a fastidious and hypercritical sect of Christians, but the Church of a Christian nation.

This fact appears still more strikingly when we compare the churches of the sister countries. standards of the English are nearly, if not quite, as voluminous as the standards of the Scotch They occupy, probably, as many pages church. But history tells us that while every form in print. affairs a cheerful minister with no convictions. Such a man exercises a pacific influence. He moderates. He stands between the rival factions. He is never thrown off his balance by enthusiasm, or that awkward earnestness which unfits the purist for the delicate handling of the weapons with which the battle of political life is fought, and political ascendency retained. Only the mischief is, that a man unsupported by a strong belief cannot resist pressure. His keen eye, and his fine sense, resolve him what is just and honest; but he does not admire the martyrs, and he does not mean to join their ranks if he can help it. So "the ever-cheerful man of sin" closes his eyes, and pleasantly acquiesces in the inevitable. The Premier is not singular in his creed; there are few of our statesmen, now that Lord Aberdeen is gone, who would act otherwise. The "travelled Thane," indeed, inherited the obstinate earnestness and clumsiness of his race; and when, during the excitement that followed the "Durham Letter"—solitary in the House of Lords—he rose to record a solemn protest against the folly of Parliament, and the madness of the nation, he stirred feelings which the most finished rhetoric "I confess," said the stout old man, with a confidence seldom stirs. which the event has more than justified, "that when oppressed by the unanimity which prevails, and the numbers arrayed against me, I remember the 'Popish plot,' and am comforted."

of Christian opinion has flourished within the walls of the English, in the Scotch establishment the faintest symptom of intellectual nonconformity has been sternly repressed. The doctrinal exclusiveness of the one, and the doctrinal liberality of the other, cannot be sufficiently accounted for by reference to their respective standards only. articles are in many respects as minute and circumstantial as the confession. They do not, indeed, possess its logical coherence. A dogmatic scheme of doctrine cannot so easily be gathered out of them. They are not so available to the It is heresy against Christianity, not against Calvinism, or any other ism, that they chiefly prohibit. Yet there can be little doubt that, on a narrow and rigorous construction, they may lend themselves to the purposes of those who are inimical to Christian liberty. But they have not hitherto done so, and the reason is obvious. The English people have determined that they shall not be used as instruments of oppression. They have decided, whether logically or not, yet certainly with clear practical sense, that if an Englishman's belief is substantially Christian, it is to be found in one or other of his Church's formularies; and the occasional assaults of zealots and fanatics, and one-sided thinkers, have been stubbornly repelled, and resented with peculiar soreness.

It is no secret that, at the present time, a large class of churchmen are desirous that a more rigid conformity should be exacted. They are anxious that their opponents should not be permitted to remain among them. The direct issue therefore comes to be—is it desirable that these men should be compelled to leave? Few, we think, except the most thoughtless partisans, will be disposed to answer in the affirmative. The wise words of Mr. Disraeli have been echoed by all prudent and liberal men—"it does not appear to me that the nineteenth century is a season when the Church should punish error, but when it should rather confute it."

There can be no doubt that a change in the way of limitation would make the Church less re-It would cease to embody the presentative. diversities in the national faith. When it became exactly logical and dogmatic, it would cease to be national. It would thus lose the elastic pliability which enables it, in the best sense, to become all things to all men. There is no doubt, as we have admitted, a limit to toleration. The Church of a Christian people must be Christian. Has then the legitimate march-line been in this case passed? It will be very difficult, if not impossible, to shew that it has been. We know the class of men against whose living representatives the hostility of clerical potentates is directed. Their names are familiar to most of us-familiar as household Many were great scholars—many illuswords. trious orators-many worked nobly for freedom. England and the English Church is justly proud of those churchmen, and even the ecclesiastical helot does not war with the dead (who have not died recently), else he would require to score out every third or fourth name from the roll of those who have deserved well of the Monarchy. Yet how

many of these men would have passed unscathed through the ordeal which we propose to establish'? They belong to history; but of our own generation who are the churchmen whose names will be familiar in the ears of our grandchildren, and who will be associated with whatever is best and purest in the Christian activities of this century? Coleridge, Arnold, Pusey, Jowett, Kingsley, Stanley, Trench, Robertson, Frederick Maurice,—men belonging without exception to the classes we are asked to proscribe! Are there any where among us better examples, morally and intellectually, of what Christianity has done, and can do? You have not, it is true, repaid them very liberally as yet; but if you will not put them among your bishops, do not at least put them among your No one can doubt that the man who penned these sentences—sentences which in their sobriety, their subdued fervour, their scrupulous avoidance of rhetoric, and vivid colouring of any kind, seem to me as eloquent as they are touching is prepared to sacrifice more than he has yet done, for what he holds to be the truth of God. there is also a deeper work which is not dependent on the opinions of men, in which many elements combine, some alien to religion, or accidentally at variance with it. That work can hardly expect to win much popular favour, so far as it runs counter to the feelings of religious parties. he who bears a part in it may feel a confidence, which no popular caresses or religious sympathy could inspire, that he has by a divine help been enabled to plant his foot somewhere beyond the

He may depart hence before the waves of time. natural term, worn out with intellectual toil; regarded with suspicion by many of his contemporaries; yet not without a sure hope that the love of truth which men of saintly lives often seem to slight, is, nevertheless, accepted before God." it advisable that men animated by a spirit like this should be driven away from us? Ought a national church to embrace the Coleridges, the Arnolds, the Maurices, or only the Calvinistic section of the clergy? Of one thing we may be sure. Unless it continue to retain those and similar men within its pale, it will cease to represent, as it has hitherto done, the Christian sentiment of the nation. The national sanctuary will become, necessarily and inevitably, the conventicle of a clique.

The success of such a policy must of course weaken the Church. In an age characteristically divided, we cannot safely imitate the mediæval If, when we have abolished every exclusiveness. secular disability, we allow the clergy to form themselves into a close corporation, we will create innumerable dissenters. We will render hostility more bitter and more violent. Nor is this all. To the mind of a layman, especially of one who looks back not ungratefully to the past, it is a very grave consideration that these evils will be brought upon the Church, not by an unreasoning adherence to, but by a wilful departure from, its historical character. The Church of England has been a bulwark of toleration. She has been the freest and most liberal of all religious societies. She has successfully defended her own liberties; she

has successfully defended the liberties of the people, against the despotism of one century, and the fanaticism of another. And she has reaped her reward. She has retained the affections of the common people; a cultivated society has not been alienated from her worship. Even to the mere man of the world she is still an Alma Mater. Nor can the most inveterate dissenter regard, without something of veneration, the noble edifices dedicated to her service, nor hear, without a sense of pride, the names of the national benefactors,

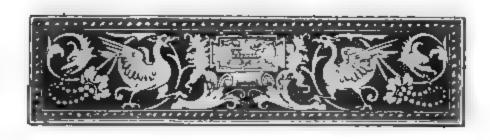
who fashion'd for the sense
These lofty pillars, spread that branching roof
Self-poised, and scoop'd into ten thousand cells
Where light and shade repose, where music dwells
Lingering and wandering on, as loth to die.

Such a fame must not be lightly sacrificed. will be an evil day for the Church when the eloquent vindication of Coleridge ceases to be appropriate—"We can say, that our Church, apostolical in its faith, primitive in its ceremonies, unequalled in its liturgical forms; that our Church, which has kindled and displayed more bright and burning lights of genius and learning, than all other Protestant churches since the Reformation, was (with the single exception of the times of Laud and Sheldon) least intolerant, when all Christians unhappily deemed a species of intolerance their religious duty; that bishops of our Church were among the first that contended against this error; and finally, that since the Reformation, when tolerance became a fashion, the Church of England, in a tolerating age, has shewn herself eminently

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tolerant, and far more so, both in spirit and in fact, than many of her most bitter opponents, who profess to deem toleration itself an insult on the rights of mankind! As to myself, who not only know the Church-establishment to be tolerant, but who see in it the greatest, if not the sole safe bulwark of toleration, I feel no necessity of defending or palliating oppressions under the two Charleses, in order to exclaim with a full and fervent heart, 'Esto perpetua!'"





WILLIAM THE SILENT.

THE EARLIEST TEACHER OF TOLERATION.

Lo! with the chivalry of Christendom
I wage my war—no nation for my friend—
Yet in each nation having hosts of friends!
PHILIP VAN ARTEVELDE,

EXAMPLE is better than precept; and so, before quitting finally the subject of toleration, it may not be unwise to dwell for a little upon the career of one of its most illustrious teachers—the "Father William" of the Dutch Commonwealth. Mr. Mill's Liberty is a fine and incisive piece of logic; but the life of William of Orange pleads even more attractively, eloquently, and effectively for freedom.

When, in 1556, Charles V. laid aside his crown, Europe was still throbbing with the pangs of the Reformation. That momentous spiritual revolt was only half accomplished, and the combatants, with their hands resting on their half-sheathed swords, awaited the signal which was to renew the strife. France was divided; Germany was divided; in England, while Henry had declared that the Pope had no power or authority

within his realm, Mary continued to burn the heretics who denied the supremacy of Rome. But the south of Europe was still loyal to the Papacy. The fervid Italian and Spanish blood had not been warmed by "the fire of Almighty God." The new King of Castile and Arragon buckled on his armour, and proclaimed himself the champion of the Catholic faith.*

By a fatal mischance, to the malignant bigot who now occupied the throne that Charles had renounced, the richest cities and fairest provinces of northern Europe belonged. A hardy race had taken possession of the shifting sandbanks and treacherous morasses—fit only, as it seemed, for the wild duck or the plover-which skirt the continent where the Meuse, the Scheldt, and the Rhine, mingle with the salt waters of the German Ocean, and had converted them into flowering meadows and fruitful pastures. Upon a half-submerged corner of Europe, lying below the level of the sea, subject to constant inundation, and protected from complete destruction only by the unsleeping energy and vigilance of its people, a great merchant commonwealth had arisen, which outrivalled and outlived the maritime republics of Italy. Amid these lagoons and shallows, the

^{*} In Mr. Motley's History of The Rise of the Dutch Republic, a great theme is treated with remarkable pictorial power, and truly dramatic insight. The revolt of the Netherlands is indeed a stirring drama, of which Orange is the hero. Than that of "Father William"—the sagacious soldier, the far-seeing statesman, the pure patriot, the tolerant reformer—history has in charge few brighter or better-beloved names; and Mr. Motley has approved himself a most competent and genial biographer.

traffic of the world in the sixteenth century was conducted. The fisheries of Holland were the most prolific then known; the cattle fattened on the plains of Flanders were the best in Europe. There were two hundred and eight walled cities within the provinces, and every city swarmed like a beehive. Antwerp had become what Venice had ceased to be-the commercial capital of Christendom-and every day in the year five hundred vessels entered and quitted its famous port. An army of one hundred thousand mechanics abode in Ghent. For many years Dort had been the exclusive market-place for English wool; and the merchandise of the Mediterranean, and the drugs and spices of the East, were stored in the warehouses of Bruges. The people who dwelt in these cities were wealthy, industrious, and ingenious. They loved liberty with vehement devotion, and their municipal institutions, the local laws and usages which they jealously, and often truculently, vindicated, had preserved a measure of practical freedom to these prosperous republics, of which the most accomplished tyranny never entirely deprived them. The ordinary amusements of the people were characteristic of a lively and ingenious race. Smiths and weavers represented the scenes of Scripture, or the allegories of poetry; smiths and weavers organized those "Guilds of Rhetoric," which, sometimes as the popular moralist, sometimes as the popular satirist, the John Bunyan or Charivari of the age, exerted no inconsiderable influence upon the contemporary politics. thoughtful man can contemplate the great festivals,

the "land-jewels" of these guilds, and compare them with the amusements now popular, without feeling that society, during the three centuries that have elapsed since Charles retired to his monastery, has not got very far in advance of the Netherland artisans. Nor was this all. noblest trophies of art and science were sown broadcast across these sand-swept, and weatherbeaten flats. A quaint, fantastic, and eminently original school of architecture had covered the land with spacious churches, and richly-adorned public buildings, had stretched in mid-air the gossamer network of the Antwerp spire, and lined the canals of Ghent and Bruges with dwellings for fat burghers, which rivalled the palaces of the Venetian nobility. Many eminent painters, moreover, had even then appeared, the founders of the school which gave birth to Peter Paul Rubens, and Anthony Van Dyck. Everywhere throughout the land there was life, everywhere the evidence of hardy strength and splendid refinement, everywhere the monuments of a cheerful, bustling, quick-witted, and ingenious people. "An unlovely land," which, even in these days of vulgar prosperity, could not have been without its charm; but which, after passing hero-like through the agony, and bloody sweat, of its Gethsemane, was to become for ever one of the "holy places" of freedom.

The marriage of "the Lady Mary" with Maximilian of Austria had transferred the Netherlands from the house of Burgundy to the house of Hapsburg, and by the marriage of her son with the heiress of Castile and Arragon, two countries far asunder, alike in geographical position and national idiosyncracy, were united under a single sceptre. That sceptre was now held by a man who was at heart a Spaniard, and who hated his gay, shrewd, and turbulent subjects in the provinces. He had, moreover, dedicated his life to a single object—an object which could only be reached by wading through their blood.

The character of Philip dismays the historian. It is one of those which it is almost impossible to explain. He was a fanatic and a voluptuary—a man whose virtues were more detestable than his vices. His dull ferocity is without parallel in history. Even the bloodthirstiness of Alva could not rival his master's. He was cured of an ailment from which he suffered on learning of the butcheries which followed the fall of Haarlem; he wrote with indignant bitterness against the "clemency" of an edict which enacted that his Protestant subjects should be, not "burned," but simply "hanged." There have been men whom a vehement temper, a fine indignation, the hysterica passio of Lear, have hurried into unmeditated cruelty. No such extenuation can be offered for His heart was icy, his temperament sluggish, his feelings frigid. He was never impelled by strong emotion, nor overwhelming He slew his subjects as a butcher passion. slays sheep; it was a methodical, common-place, utterly unromantic business. Even his fanaticism was not constant; the plea of sincerity cannot be advanced in his behalf. To extirpate heresy was 210

the work of his life; he would not relent he said, "though the sky should fall on his head;" but for the imperial crown he consented to undo that work. He undertook, if elected Emperor, to withdraw the Spaniards from the Netherlands, to tolerate Protestantism, and to restore the Prince of Orange to his possessions. The sullen and merciless tyrant was content to be bribed into humanity.

To extirpate heresy was, as we say, Philip's mission. Early in his reign he had concerted with the French king a "Sicilian Vespers" for the Huguenot leaders throughout their dominions. Henry's death, and the conveniences of political intrigue, did not allow the design to be carried out at that time in France, and the dismal festivities of "the Paris wedding" were postponed for a dozen years. But Philip was true to his troth, and the fertile and populous Netherland was the field which he selected. There, in fire and blood, he approved his inveterate devotion to the Church of Christ.

How, in what manner, he did his work is branded in black letters on the page of history. "The Netherland inquisition," he complacently confessed, "is more implacable than the Spanish;" and in his industrious hands it more than justified its bitter renown. One hundred thousand Netherland heretics were murdered—not coarsely nor vulgarly, but with the last refinements, the most delicate subtleties of torture—by this great religious organization. Rigorous edicts were promulgated, which punished the unspoken thought as well

as the visible act. Men and women were strangled, beheaded, and burned alive in hundreds, because they had murmured against the rapacity of the priests, or could repeat a paraphrase by Clement Marot. It was estimated that by 1565 more than fifty thousand persons suspected of heresy had been put to death. Thirty thousand skilled artisans had emigrated to England before the Duke of Alva was despatched from Spain; and on the news of his coming a perfect panic seized the populace, and the highways were blocked by the throngs that fled from Philip's terrible lieutenant. Alva did his master's work in his master's spirit. Under his government these fair and fruitful places became a charnel-house. The hands of the executioner were never idle. The best blood of the land stained the scaffold. Whole districts were depopulated. Horrible barbarities were committed in every village. Many of the wealthiest cities were abandoned for days to the outrages of a licentious and vindictive soldiery. "A wail of agony," wrote Count Nieuwenar, "was heard above Zutphen last Sunday, a sound as of a mighty massacre." "Antwerp" (exclaims Orange, shortly after that Spanish Fury "whereof the memory shall be abominable so long as the world stands") -- "Antwerp, once the powerful and blooming, now the most forlorn and desolate city of Christendom!" And at length a sentence of the Holy Office was published which condemned all the inhabitants of the provinces to death as heretics,—surely "the most concise death-warrant" ever pronounced upon a people! Women violated, men shot down like dogs, great cities reduced to ashes, the most splendid civilization in Europe blackened and defaced,—thus did the Most Catholic King manifest his horrible constancy to the service of his Redeemer.*

The historian can regard such blind and brutal folly only with indignation, astonishment, and horror. The Lady Alice, in the poem, longs to have for one hour her lover's murderer within her hands:

Ah! just to go about with many knights
Wherever you went, and somehow on one day,
In a thick wood, to catch you off your guard,
Let you find, you and your some fifty friends,
Nothing but arrows wheresoe'er you turned,
Yea, and red crosses, great spears over them;

THE GHENT PATERNOSTER.

Our devil who dost in Brussels dwell, Curst be thy name in earth and hell: Thy kingdom speedily pass away, Which hath blasted and blighted us many a day; Thy will nevermore be done, In heaven above nor under the sun; Thou takest daily our daily bread; Our wives and children lie starving or dead. No man's trespasses thou forgivest; Revenge is the food on which thou livest. Thou leadest all men into temptation; Unto evil thou hast delivered this nation. Our Father, in heaven which art, Grant that this hellish devil may soon depart— And with him his Council false and bloody, Who make murder and rapine their daily study— And all his savage war-dogs of Spain, Oh, send them back to the devil, their father, again. Amen!

^{*} The intensity of hatred which the cruelties practised by Alva excited, is strikingly illustrated by a satirical poem of the time, entitled The Ghent Paternoster. It is addressed to the Duke.

And so between a lane of my true men
To walk up pale, and stern, and tall, and then,
And then to make you kneel, O Knight Guesclin;
And then——

Could the historian for one moment so meet with Philip—the bigot, the tyrant, the assassin—something might be done to appease the fierce craving for justice which the terrible tale provokes. But his most scathing words are impotent—ah, so impotent! He feels that to inflict punishment on this monster the language of mortal vengeance does not serve. He takes refuge in polished scorn; the white lips curl with bitter courtesy; nay, better still, he leaves the issue in stern silence to Him who judgeth righteously. For nowhere can that issue be adjusted now, unless "at the judgment-seat above."

Such was the man and the age that William of Orange had to deal with. A Netherlander, he had to deliver the Netherlands from Philip, and to restore political and religious freedom to his countrymen. That was the problem which was forced upon him, which he had to solve, and which from a very early period of his life he had profoundly considered. What did the solution involve?

It involved a desperate struggle with the most powerful monarchy in Europe. Spain was still in the van of the nations. Its treasury was replenished with the virgin spoils of the New World. It was, besides, a great military power. The Spanish soldier was celebrated for his romantic bravery, and his discipline was equal to his valour. No more effective or reliable troops could then be obtained. But, like the government he served, he was cruel, faithless, licentious. Both the rulers and the ruled were rotten to the core. Such a spectacle of absolute unrighteousness as the court of Spain then presented, has seldom, before or since, let us be grateful to God, been witnessed on this earth. It had thus, sown within itself, the seeds of death. But as yet its front was imposing. The Spanish monarchy still carried the impress of the master hand of Charles; the Spanish soldier, in his glittering mask of invincible steel, still bore himself as the companion of Cortes.

It was this gigantic empire, concentrating all its forces to crush the civil and religious liberties of the Netherlands, that Orange had to meet in a mortal conflict. He did meet it, and he was not worsted. Standing at bay on the extremest limit of habitable earth, his feet washed by the stormy waters of the Northern Sea, a few thousand undisciplined boors and wild sailors behind him, he drove back the chivalry of Spain, and laid among the waves the foundations of the great naval commonwealth. Such a spectacle fascinates the imagination. We cannot but ask—How was it possible for one man to achieve so great a work?

For it was in truth a single man who did the whole work. In the war of liberation William the Silent is not only the central, but the sole figure. He finished his task unaided and alone. "I have no one to help me," he writes on one occasion, "not a single man,—

Donec eris felix, multos numerabis amicos, Tempora cum erunt nubila, nullus erit."

His means were of the scantiest. The material which he had to use was often of the sorriest kind. The nobles were commonly hostile; the people not seldom apathetic. Historical conjectures are particularly unprofitable; but it may be safely asserted that had Orange not lived, Holland would not have been freed. Sullen and scattered outbursts of the popular indignation would no doubt have taken place. But it needed the consummate craft, and the unselfish devotion, of the Prince, to sublime a wild foray of "the sea-beggars" into a national deliverance.

The nobility were not to be trusted. were selfish, unprincipled, and embarrassed. all the inheritors of brilliant historical names who had crowded the saloons of the Nassau palace before the evil days, not half-a-dozen remained constant to the end. The commonwealth of Holland did not number a single knight of the Golden Fleece, except the Prince, amid its founders. the earlier stages of the conflict the nobles no doubt took the lead. There was something picturesque and fantastic, something characteristic of a sprightly and imaginative people, in the forms which the popular dissatisfaction at first assumed. This may be attributed to the nobility. A splendid and turbulent aristocracy could relish the stinging satire of Simon Renard, could stamp, with the sanction of fashion, fanciful symbols, and rhetorical protests. It was Egmont who devised, to ridicule the unpopular Cardinal, the celebrated

foolscap livery. Count Brederode, happily appropriating the reproach of Berlaymont, originated that famous rallying-cry of "The Beggars," which was to become the watchword of a whole nation. But as the stream broadened and deepened, and grew every day more swollen and turbid, brilliant epigrams, and courtly jests, lost their value. The nobles could neither understand nor control the passions which they had helped to arouse; and, leaving Orange and his brothers almost alone with that "vile and mischievous animal called the people," the Catholic and Conservative aristocracy rallied round the king, who had betrayed their liberties, and butchered their countrymen.

Yet the characters of many of these men are not without interest to us. Even Brederode, the wild masquerader, the reckless buffoon, who held that every political campaign must terminate with a debauch, and who hated "the water of the fountain" as he hated the Spaniards and the Bishops, was at times brave, generous, and tender-hearted. Renneberg could be guilty of treason to his friend; but as he stood in the grey dawn on the square of Gröningen, men noticed that he was "ghastly as a corpse." He was at least no coward; it was no craven fear that blanched his cheek; it was rather the angina pectoris, the mortal anguish, of the brave man, who knows that he has betrayed his honour. The moody Horn, who died on the same scaffold with Egmont, was no favourite with the people; and when the crowd were washing the coffin of his companion with their tears, and kissing it as though it had been the shrine of a saint, the body

of the Admiral was left, deserted and unwatched, in the chancel of St. Gudule. But his surly honesty and truthfulness were perhaps of more sterling worth than any of his fellow-sufferer's more captivating qualities. Egmont was certainly a dashing soldier; he had generous instincts, and the lofty character of Orange sometimes kindled him into momentary greatness; but he was fickle, vacillating, and vainglorious, and as a statesman he failed utterly. Art and poetry have touched his name with their shining lines; his death no doubt was heroic, and the last letter of Lamoral D'Egmont—" Ready to die "—to the sovereign who had doomed him to death, is that of a calm and magnanimous gentleman; still, it cannot be denied that it would have been better for his fame had the soldier fallen on one of his earlier battlefields—in the rapid charge at St. Quentin, or in the wild melée on the wet sands at Gravelines.

It was on the nation, then, that Orange was forced to rely; and the Netherlanders, as a whole, were barely more reliable than their chiefs. Coleridge has vividly described the difficulties which beset the leader who depends on the unorganized force of the people—"the inconsistencies, the weaknesses, the bursts of heroism, followed by prostration and cowardice, which invariably characterise all popular efforts." To all these, in aggravated forms, Orange had to submit. And the Netherlanders were jealous not only of the Spaniards, but of each other. The estates were constantly squabbling, and the fat burghers who filled their ranks could seldom, even in the

great crises of the revolution, rise above their habitual parsimony. Provincial jealousies, and provincial enmities, proved on more than one occasion nearly fatal to a cause whose success demanded perfect union and unselfishness, and, despite all the efforts of Orange, ultimately marred the symmetry of the edifice which he reared. "These men of butter," as Alva irreverently called them, were moreover bad soldiers in the field. single Spanish column frequently routed an entire army of Netherlanders. Holland and Zeland, indeed, were always constant to their Prince. Even on the field their hardy burghers and windbeaten mariners could look the Spaniard in the face; while behind the gates of their cities—behind the gates of Haarlem, and Alkmaar, and Leyden—they proved themselves invincible. The heroic magnanimity, with which simple citizens fought and died upon their rotten walls, was worthy of the man who led them. Driven into this corner of the earth, the hunted burghers turned, and displayed a valour and a constancy which rival "all Greek, all Roman fame," and remain memorable for ever.

It is often difficult for the historian to use simple language. His imagination is fascinated by his hero's greatness; and in describing the famous orator, or the consummate captain, his speech acquires a glow, which hides, perhaps, as much as it reveals. Writing about Orange, one is constantly tempted to commit this error; to employ terms which, though not untrue, fail to impress, because not minutely characteristic. He

was so truly and unaffectedly great that one is only able to say, as it were, "Here is a great man, a great soldier, a great statesman," and so to pass on. But that greatness is not rightly understood until we lay aside the courtly trappings of history, and speak in unambitious words of those qualities of his intellect and heart which history does not deem the heroic.

As to the qualities on which History does condescend to bestow her distinguished regard, there need be little discussion. Orange's capacity as a soldier cannot be seriously impeached. was pitted against the first commanders of his age. Alva was his earliest antagonist; and the gaunt and sallow Duke was one of Charles's veterans. Till he came to the Netherlands he had never been worsted; on many a Pagan and Christian battlefield he had triumphed; more than once his eagle-eye, and tiger-like heart, had nerved his beaten soldiers, turned the tide of victory, and saved the monarchy. Vehement and bloodthirsty by nature, only on the battle-field did he manifest perfect self-restraint. The ferocious executioner, who sent maidens and matrons to the stake, who spilt the blood of the tenderest and noblest like water, never threw away the life of a single trooper. His Fabian tactics not unfrequently exposed him to the reproaches of the hot-headed among his own men; but, as he himself said, he heeded not "the babble of soldiers"—the last and rarest virtue in a general. But even Alva, everywhere else the victor, left the Netherlands a baffled man. Don John of Austria, who followed him, did not fare better. The beautiful and fascinating son of the Emperor, the hero of Lepanto, who had captured the sacred standard of the Prophet, and shaken the supremacy of the Crescent, was foiled and outwitted by the subtle brain of William. And even the splendid military genius of Alexander of Parma, the most patient, temperate, fearless, and unscrupulous of men, could not turn the scale against the Netherlander. With a few foreign mercenaries who could not be relied on, and a few unarmed burghers who could, the Prince of Orange drove back the invincible legions of Spain, led by their most consummate captains.

His military capacity was chiefly shewn in his power of combination. His keen eye detected at a glance that the ruinous tower, the unwalled city, the desolate sandbank, was the key to the position, and before the enemy had discovered its value, his troops were massed around it; it was strengthened, provisioned, manned. Then for months the tide of battle surged around the devoted spot, while the Prince and his little army lay in the rear, ready to aid, and able to retreat. And it was Orange who saw-probably sooner, and certainly more clearly than any other man—the peculiar strength of his own position. He threw himself confidently This was the characteristic of the upon the sea. struggle, and from this its most picturesque features are derived. The war was a war in which sea-born men invoked the aid of the sea. wild "sea-beggars," who never took or gave quarter, who proclaimed by the Crescents in their

caps that they would rather serve the Turk than the Pope, were the most skilful sailors in the world, and kept the Spaniards imprisoned on the shore. Across the wintry meres the Hollander on his swift skates glided noiselessly to assail his enemy. Amphibious battles were fought, in which the rising tide sometimes dealt more death than the weapons of the combatants. At length, the estates, urged on and animated by Orange, resolved on a grand act of self-sacrifice. Leyden was beleaguered. If Leyden fell, Holland fell, and Leyden was at the point of death. It was determined that the great dykes, which had been raised with infinite labour to repel the storms of the ocean, should be broken down. They were levelled. The country was flooded. A fleet of two hundred vessels sailed over fruitful pastures, and fields yellow with corn. The besiegers found themselves besieged—found the water, day after day, rising about their feet-found the dry land, day after day, receding behind them. A great fear fell upon them. They were contending not only against man, but against the ocean. They raised the siege, and fled. Leyden was relieved. Holland was saved.

Friend and foe have owned that William, if not the ablest, was one of the ablest statesmen of his age. Granvelle was Orange's most astute opponent; and Granvelle quickly penetrated the character of his rival. "Tis a man of profound genius, vast ambition—dangerous, acute, politic"—the Cardinal told Philip at an early period. Cautious, subtle, and adroit, gifted with an even

temper and a superhuman restraint, the Prince was the model of a diplomatist. "They say he cannot sleep," some one once observed of him, and in a sense the saying was true. For he was "aye ready;" no crisis ever took him unprepared. He read the consequences of events, and the motives of men, with singular penetration. In that last interview between him and Egmont, which poetry and fiction have done their best to immortalize, he is said to have described, with prescient sagacity, the terrible tragedy that was drawing on, and to have solemnly warned his friend of the end that was in store. It was in vain; whether blinded by a fatal credulity, or detained, as Goethe has represented him, by a sense of honour to his king, the Count would not listen to the warning; and quitting the Prince, he returned to his doom. most secret thoughts and actions of Philip were laid bare to Orange. A master of the arts of political intrigue, he had established a system of espionage at the Spanish Court; and not even in his cabinet or his bed-chamber did the king escape the sleepless eye of his watchful foe. Finesse was met by finesse, intrigue by intrigue, the mines dug by the Cardinal and the Prince of Eboli werecountermined by William. Than his steady fencing with Don John no better example of his masterly political tact could be selected. John had come to the Netherlands as the messenger of mercy. But Orange from the first saw through the hollow pretence. The Spaniard desired to strengthen his hands by peace only that he might the more securely prepare for war.

"War," the Prince at once said, "is preferable to a doubtful peace;" but he had to wait until the eyes of his countrymen, dazzled by the youthful hero, were opened; and the reserve in which he entrenched himself, the masterly art with which he "did nothing," were admirable and entirely suc-Don John soon felt that he was within cessful. the toils of a more expert fowler. His dread of that wily hunter, and the frantic struggles which the caged lion made to liberate himself from the net. broke the soldier's heart. The brilliant hero of Lepanto aged early, and died, like Pitt, "an old man," while yet in the prime of manhood. death-bed, despite his weaknesses and insincerities, cannot be looked upon without a feeling of com-"Tossing upon his uneasy couch, he miseration. again arranged, in imagination, the combinations of great battles; again shouted his orders to rushing squadrons; and listened with brightening eye to the trumpet of victory." He died; while the serene and inexorable foe went on to finish his work.

There is nothing more characteristic in Orange's career than his progressive development—his gradual advance in feeling and opinion. He is in his earlier years a magnificent and princely gentleman, a fitting representative of great historic houses, both in France and the Netherlands, a nobleman given to hospitality, disposed to lead a secure and easy life, and not feeling that he has any other duties in particular to attend to. But the evil days of the persecution arrive, and stir the heart of the Netherlander. The dispute does not interest him much; whether a man be a Calvinist or a Catholic

seems to him a matter of considerable indifference; perhaps upon the whole he thinks a gentleman should die in the faith to which he is bred; but he detests tyranny, and hates murder, and so he cannot but oppose the tyrannical and murderous policy of Philip. At last the moral problem of the Reformation forces itself upon him. What does it all mean? Whence comes this wonderful constancy, which nerves unlettered men and feeble women to die at the stake for an opinion? The spirit which is strangely stirring the nations, touches the Prince also. He ceases to be a subject of Philip and the Pope. He becomes a rebel and a Protestant—a great sufferer, and a mighty leader. The mild and tranquil temper has been exalted by torture into the heroic.

But Orange, when he leagued himself with the Reformation, rose above the Reformers. Of all the men of his age, he was the only one who rightly comprehended the principle which the Reformation asserted, which gave it any permanent vitality, which made it anything more than a mere sanitary reform—a bill for white-washing the monasteries, and scrubbing the men who dwelt in them. But this idea—the idea of spiritual freedom and individual responsibility was no sooner asserted than it was abandoned. The moment the Protestant ceased to be persecuted, he began to persecute. The apologists of the early Reformers tell us that this was inevitable, that they were no worse than their neighbours, that the doctrine of religious liberty was the slow growth of a gentler and more tolerant

age. But they forget that there was at least one man among the Reformers who understood that doctrine well, and who strenuously strove to enforce it on his contemporaries. William of Orange was the earliest teacher of toleration. On this subject nothing can be more admirable than his logic, except his practice. "Should we obtain power over any city or cities," he wrote in 1568 to his confidential agent, "let the communities of Papists be as much respected and protected as possible. Let them be overcome, not by violence, but with gentlemindedness, and virtuous treat-The Anabaptist was regarded with a peculiar hostility in that age, but Orange sternly denounced punishment against any who should molest even an Anabaptist. "We declare to you, therefore," he wrote to the magistracy of Middelburgh, "that you have no right to trouble yourselves with any man's conscience, so long as nothing is done to cause private harm, or public scandal. We therefore expressly ordain that you desist from troubling these Baptists, from offering hindrance to their handicraft and daily trades by which they may earn bread for their wives and children; and that you permit them henceforth to open their shops, and to do their work according to the custom of former days. Beware, therefore, of disobedience, and of resistance to the ordinance which we now establish." In this, as in some other respects, Orange absolutely towers above any, the greatest of his contemporaries. His friend, Sainte Aldegonde, was a man of the most versatile abilities—a poet, an orator,

a theologian, a fine scholar, a subtle diplomatist and yet the Prince's liberality vexed and irritated "The affair of the Anabaptists," he writes, " has been renewed. The Prince objects to exclude them from citizenship. He answered me sharply that their yea was equal to our oath, and that we should not press this matter unless we were willing to confess that it was just for the Papists to compel us to a divine service which was against our conscience. In short, I don't see how we can accomplish our wish in this matter. Prince has uttered reproaches to me that our clergy are striving to obtain a mastery over con-He praised lately the saying of a monk who was not long ago here, that our pot had not gone to the fire as often as that of our antagonists; but that when the time came it would be black enough. In short, the Prince fears that after a few centuries the clerical tyranny on both sides will stand in this respect on the same footing." It is impossible to read these sentences without surprise—surprise that such a noble temperance should have been possible in that age—but with double surprise that, when thus admirably enforced, the doctrine should have appeared strange and repulsive to the most accomplished gentleman among the Protestant leaders. The Prince's efforts to secure a religious peace, an Emancipation Act, were not unsuccessful; and that "every man should remain free and unquestioned as to his religion," was the basis on which the Dutch Constitution was framed.*

^{*} It has been said that Orange became a liberal in politics very

Nor was this singular temperance the fruit, as it sometimes is, of a spirit of scepticism. The Prince was profoundly devout. In all his triumphs, in all his reverses, he shewed the most sincere and simple confidence in God's providence. He never

much as he became a reformer in religion. Toleration was forced upon him. To a man in his position—the leader of a cause which embraced various religious factions—the policy of "civil and religious liberty," was the only practicable or safe policy. I think that his life cannot be read in this way. Toleration to the Prince was never a political necessity alone. He was constitutionally tolerant; bigotry in belief, narrowness or absolutism in any shape, were hateful to his mild and liberal nature. He saw from the first that St. Paul's scheme of Christian liberty—a scheme explained by Milton in a passage which cannot be quoted too often—was eternally true, as well as locally expedient:—

"Yet is it not impossible that Truth may have more shapes than one? What else is all that rank of things indifferent, wherein truth may be on this side, or on the other, without being unlike herself? What but a vain shadow else is the abolition of 'those ordinances, that hand-writing nailed to the cross?' What great purchase is this Christian liberty which Paul so often boasts of? His doctrine is, that he who eats or eats not, regards a day or regards it not, may do How many, other things might be tolerated in either to the Lord. peace, and left to conscience, had we but charity, and were it not the chief stronghold of our hypocrisy to be ever judging one another? I fear yet this iron yoke of outward conformity hath left a slavish print upon our necks; the ghost of a linen decency yet haunts us. We stumble, and are impatient at the least dividing of one visible congregation from another, though it be not in fundamentals; and through our forwardness to suppress, and our backwardness to recover, any enthralled piece of truth out of the gripe of custom, we care not to keep truth separated from truth, which is the fiercest rent and disunion of all. We do not see," he continues, with a burst of the strong, impetuous contempt, so characteristic of his argument, "that while we still affect by all means a rigid external formality, we may as soon fall again into a gross conforming stupidity, a stark and dead congealment of 'wood and hay and stubble' forced and frozen together, which is more to the sudden degenerating of a church than many subdichotomies of petty schisms."

doubted that his cause—the cause of freedom and righteousness—would ultimately prevail. "That the desired end will be reached if you hold fast your resolution, and take to heart the means that God presents to you, I feel to be absolutely certain." He beheld, like all the early reformers and martyrs, in defeat, in victory, in the senate, on the battle-field, the immediate working of a Divine "Nevertheless," he wrote to his brother Louis,* after the disastrous rout at Jemmingen, "since it has thus pleased God, it is necessary to have patience, and to loose not courage; conforming ourselves to His divine will—as for my part, I have determined to do in everything which may happen, still proceeding onward in our work with His almighty aid." The fall of Ziericksee was a source of deep regret to Orange. "Had we received the least succour in the world," he said, "the poor city should never have fallen. I could

^{*} Count Louis of Nassau, "the Bayard of the Netherlands," is the most chivalrous figure in the war. The fire of the soldier, the simplicity of the child, the keen wit of the courtier, and the gay abandon of the roving chevalier, are happily blended in his character. His heroism was as bright, and rapid, and sparkling as his wit. When the battle of Jemmingen was lost he swam across the Ems almost alone, and escaped into Germany. To Count Louis may probably be attributed a famous historical repartee. The Count and certain other Commissioners, empowered by Orange, were negotiating with the French Court, soon after the massacre of St. Bartholomew. They insisted upon guarantees being given. "Is the word of a king," asked Catherine of Medicis, indignantly, "is the word of a king not sufficient!" "No, Madam," was the reply, "by Saint Bartholomew, no!" Count Louis and his young brother, Augustus, perished at the battle of Mook—the battle whose fatal termination had been presaged by the phantom fight upon the heavens, which so disquieted the worthy burghers of Utrecht.

get nothing from France or England with all my efforts. Nevertheless, we do not lose courage, but hope that, although abandoned by all the world, the Lord God will extend His right hand over us." "One must do one's best," he writes on another occasion, "and believe that when such misfortunes happen, God desires to prove us. If He sees that we do not lose our courage, He will assuredly help us. Had we thought otherwise, we should never have pierced the dykes on a memorable occasion, for it was an uncertain thing, and a great sorrow for the poor people: yet did God bless the undertaking. He will bless us still, for His arm has not been shortened." When the beleaguered fishermen of Alkmaar wrote to him for aid, he replies in that tone of grave and lofty enthusiasm so characteristic of his eloquence—" As, notwithstanding our efforts, it has pleased God Almighty to dispose of Haarlem according to His divine will, shall we therefore deny and deride His holy Word? Has the strong arm of the Lord thereby grown weaker? Has His Church therefore come to nought? You ask if I have entered into a firm treaty with any great king or potentate, to which I answer, that before ever I took up the cause of the distressed Christians in these provinces, I had entered into a close alliance with the King of kings; and I am firmly convinced that all who put their trust in Him shall be saved by his Almighty The God of armies will raise up armies for us to do battle with our enemies and His own." Sentences like these are surely worthy of preservation-surely deserve to be studied by all who

would fain hear through "the babble of this Babel" the voice of a Divine leader.

It is not to be wondered at that a man, so inspired, should have been constant in calamity. Sometimes anxious before, he was always tranquil after, the struggle began. In the darkest hour of his fortunes, the grave equanimity of his temper, his singular serenity and cheerfulness, roused the hopes, and cheered the hearts, of his countrymen. Mens æqua in arduis, the friends of Warren Hastings wrote under the picture of the great proconsul in the council chamber at Calcutta. The motto would have fitted Orange; but the one which the Hollander delights to associate with the patriot prince—Sævis tranquillus in undis—is perhaps even more characteristic. Across the stormy waters of that bleak and weather-beaten shore, the beacon flashed its tranquil light, guiding the strong, and strengthening those who were ready to perish.

The value of a character like this, not alone to his own countrymen, but to us and to all time, it is difficult to overrate. It is so seldom that the hero of a religious revolution is not a bigot or a fanatic! Some of the worst crimes, many of the most childish blunders, that history records, have been committed by these men. They too frequently, moreover, excite our contempt and indignation by their conceited rejection of what they are pleased to call "the weapons of the flesh." The sword of the Lord and of Gideon has sometimes been drawn with wisdom and cunning; it is oftener, however, the watchword of men who, by their own

fanatical folly and negligence, invite the defeat which they merit and suffer. But here, at last, is a religious hero of quite another stamp—a man of God, and yet a man of the world; a soldier of the Cross, and yet a sagacious captain; a good Christian, and yet a great statesman; profoundly devout, and yet profoundly politic. "I do not," he exclaims emphatically, "calumniate those who tell us to put our trust in God. That is my opinion also. But it is trusting God to use the means which He places in our hands, and to ask that His blessing may come upon them."

In his secular, as in his religious, politics, the Prince was at issue with his contemporaries. trust of "that vile and mischievous animal called the people," was the prevailing sentiment among the statesmen of the age. Orange, when he renounced Philip, did not raise a revolutionary standard: he did not desire to establish any new or democratic scheme of government; he was a Conservative leader; Je maintiendrai was the device of his policy as of his escutcheon. But though an aristocrat by birth, and bred in a despotic camp, he was always anxious—unaffectedly, earnestly anxious —to refer his policy for ratification to the great body of the people. He never flattered them; he unsparingly attacked their vices; but, feeling that he perfectly trusted them, they trusted him in return with an entire devotion. "Men in their utmost need," he writes, "daily come to me for refuge, as if I held power over all things in my How far can the people be relied on? still remains the central question of representative

government. The answer seldom raises the true issue. With a real *leader*, like Orange, we may make reply, we need not fear the people, but until we can find a few authentic leaders, we had best keep our constituencies as manageable and select as possible. Not having many such men at this present, it remains to be seen whether the experiments we are now making can prove altogether satisfactory.

Such was the pater patriæ, as portrayed in his most familiar letters. Eloquent letters they are; admirably clear and simple, sometimes warmed to a fine heat by earnestness and indignation, yet never violent nor intemperate. His public dispatches are eloquent also; the successive appeals which he addressed to the Provinces, and to Europe, are perhaps the most memorable series of Public Papers ever written by a statesman.

But are we to leave his faults, weaknesses, vices, unrecorded? His enemies have attempted to blacken his character, but with no considerable success. They have said that he was over-cautious, a coward, a man devoured by a selfish ambition. Cautious he was; no man who is not so is entitled to be a leader; but his caution was not the niggardly and ungenerous prudence of a cold-blooded or sluggish temperament. The caution which Orange manifested was the firmness to restrain premature sympathy and unavailing indignation, and to bide the time when action could become effective. This restraint is not "a careful vice;" it is, on the contrary, a rare virtue, a high and powerful effort of the reason. For to leave the

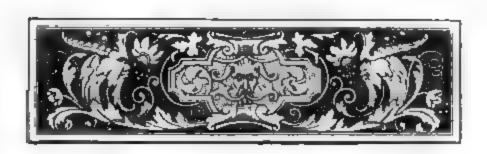
provocation unresented, and to hold back till the appointed hour is ripe, is infinitely harder than to obey the natural instinct, and to throw oneself, blindly, impulsively, with a wild cry of hatred and despair, into the mêlée. Orange was "the Taciturn," until it was time to make his voice heard; and his tongue, like his pen, was eloquent; then there was no lack of decision and plain-speaking.

The charge of cowardice is still more mar-If William was by nature timid and sensitive, as some have affirmed, the constancy of his heroism becomes all the more memorable. There is no nobler spectacle in this world than that of the trembling and shrinking martyr, shivering with terror as the flames gather round the faint limbs, yet to the end constant to her God. Be sure that such an offering is not less acceptable to Him who holds up "the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees," than the confident and unfaltering witness of the strong man, who goes to the stake, with a song of thanksgiving on his lips, and a sense of triumph in his heart. And to assert that the Prince of Orange embarked in the revolutionary war to gratify his cupidity and his ambition, can only be credited by those who believe that to sacrifice place, power, fortune, friends, for a country's freedom, is the token of covetousness, and to refuse with even too constant pertinacity "a kingly crown," the head-mark of ambition. Such charges refute themselves, and may be left to the oblivion they bespeak.

We are not, indeed, solicitous to shew that William was altogether blameless. Happily, few heroes,

beyond the school girl's imagination, are. There may have been a savour of worldliness, and overanxious policy, in that simple disinterestedness, in that lofty patriotism. It may have been so; yet we care not to amend the verdict. For when we know that a man is essentially heroic and vitally noble, an alloy of weakness, nay, of baseness, does not lessen our regard. "They may sit," says Sir Thomas Browne, "in the orchestra and noblest seats of Heaven, who have held up shaking hands in the fire, and humanly contended for glory."

In fine, the character of "Father William" is one which, in all its aspects, it is pleasant and profitable to contemplate. The lofty and spacious dome of that forehead concealed a profound intelligence; but the heart was meek and tender as a woman's. " There I will make my sepulchre," he said, when for the last time the fugitive and the outlaw returned to the land which he was to save. There he has made his sepulchre—his body is enshrined in its dust, his memory in the hearts of its people. The anointed murderer might thunder the ban against the rebel, might defame his career, and bribe his assassin. But the story was already written. Unnoted by tyrant and bigot, his name had been "enrolled in the Capitol."



A CRITIC ON CRITICISM.

A RAMBLE IN THE SPRING-TIME.

There is nothing left remarkable

Beneath the visiting moon.

Antony and Cleopatra.

YES! I like the spring time as I like the rosy faces and the rosier hearts of children. Spring is the childhood of the world, and it proves how fresh and healthy the old world must be at heart, that in this its six thousandth spring, or thereby, it is still full of gladness—glad as when the morning stars sang together. One might believe that the happy carol of their dawn had ere this been tempered by a somewhat "sad astrology." But the weather-beaten, blood-stained, sin-stricken earth, as some please to call it, clearly does not despair of itself. Let who will moan and maunder in disconsolate sonnets, the "life-giving" planet remains hale and hearty and hopeful. The most bitter winter experience cannot disenchant it. The lily at my foot is pencilled as delicately and tenderly, I believe, on my conscience, as any

that bloomed on the banks of the blessed rivers, and were plucked by Eve in Paradise.

And no one of the blessed rivers—not even "Pison which compasseth Havilah where there is gold, and the gold of that land is good, and bdellium and the onyx stone"—was more beautiful than this ragged Scotch stream is today, on this the first morning of our Scottish Is it not a charming picture? Why did not Copley Fielding paint it? Or rather let us hope that M'Culloch, "lord of the mountain and the flood," may stumble on it this summer as he marches to his royalty on Loch Corruskin; or that Waller Paton, in search of the sea-breeze, may one day set up his easel on its daisied banks. Yes, it must have a Scotch annalist—no English artist, good man and true though he be amid the Lincoln flats, could truly explain the wild charm of these wind-swept bents. And, if it please him, let him introduce, in this its most sheltered nook, the sleeping fisher, spread out with ample and lazy limbs in the sunshine, and dimly indicate, by a single masterly touch, "the guardian angel" who hovers over his head, and mingles with his dream. Beautiful the spirit is as Murillo's, only her eyes are blue, and the light golden hair is copied from Titian - Titziano Vicelli, as they called him in Venice.

The vision fades, and his eyelids open upon the common day. But the unearthly music yet rings in his ears, and the only mortal words into which it may be woven are those Keats wrote before he died. Do you remember that last sonnet? Let us repeat it solemnly, and let the words wander down with the waters of the river to the sea.

Bright star! would I were stedfast as thou art—
Not in lone splendour hung aloft the night,
And watching with eternal lids apart,
Like Nature's patient sleepless Eremite,
The moving waters at their priest-like task
Of pure ablution round earth's human shores,
Or gazing on the new soft-fallen mask
Of snow upon the mountains and the moors,—
No,—yet still steadfast, still unchangeable,
Pillowed upon my fair love's ripening breast,
To feel for ever its soft fall and swell,
Awake for ever in a sweet unrest,
Still, still, to hear her tender-taken breath
And so live ever—or else swoon to death.

How the star-sheen on the tremulous tide, and that white death-like "mask," haunt the imagination! Had the poet, who felt the grass grow over him ere he was five-and-twenty, been crowned with a hundred summers, could he have done anything more consummate? I doubt it.

It is a pleasant picture indeed, this river estuary, almost as bright and sunny as the picture in the dream. The stream unrolls itself, snake-like, through the centre of the oozy plain which the tide has dried for the snipe and the sand-lark; on either hand arise the snowy drifts of the sand-hills; and midway across the valley which they form, the blue lustrous sea-line runs straight as an arrow. For yonder truly lies that great sea to which men go down in ships from the haven under the hill; to-day it murmurs, it whispers, it caresses, and ever and anon breaks into a loud

jubilant laugh of joy, which yet has in it something eerie and bodeful, and that moans of shipwreck among the Hebrides. Half a mile down a ferry-boat is paddling across the stream, with a boisterous crew of children on board, who laugh and shout at the pitch of their shrill voices, and splash the waves over each other with their oars in childish frolic.

See! a yellow moss bee, stirred from its winter sleep, reaches the gateway of the outer world. Dazed by the unaccustomed glare, it tumbles over and over among the grass, till, recovering its feet, it prudently backs into its byke. With ear to the turf, one hears it droning and murmuring far within—dreaming, it may be, of the "foxgloves on Furness Fell." A brace of sand-larks trip daintily through the loose sea-weed at our feet; and the salmon trout are leaping in the pool beyond. Ah! yonder comes the cloud for which all the morning we have watched and prayed; and the fine gut falls lightly upon the curled water. A yellow-fin misses the bob—misses it luckily for, in another moment, the pool is deeply stirred, and a white sea-trout strikes the tail-fly on our Away it shoots like a sunbeam—now casting itself madly into the air, then rubbing its nose obstinately against the sharp stones at the bottom; yielding and giving ground as the reel cautiously gathers in the line, until it lies panting on the shore in its silver armour—armour like to that in which Aphrodite of Cnidus, and Joan of France, and other valiant maidens, clad their white limbs, when they went down to battle with

men and gods. "A bonny fish," says Tom Morrice, who hails us from the opposite bank.

But the cloud has passed away, and the fisher is again stretched among his bents, and there is no sound in heaven or in earth save the rich gurgle of the peesweet (I cannot otherwise write down that wail in words), and at times the clamorous alarm of the innumerous seafowl who breed on the rocky headlands outside the bar. "Dear old Scotland!" so runs our noonday soliloquy, "there may be better and richer and wiser lands; but it has not been our luck to find them. What are the rivers and hills of Italy to your mountain-torrents? what the Mediterranean to your ice-girt sea? The Tiber is a dirty puddle; yellow ditch-water best represents to the Teutonic mind the classic and unfamiliar Arno. mortal eyes ever behold the keen, bracing, glorious green on that sea kindle the tepid milk-andwater of the Ægean? Yet Dian and Aphrodite? Tush! Look yonder!"

And we do look. She is dressed in a bodice and kirtle of shepherd tartan, her feet and arms are bare, and her yellow curls are twined negligently off her face, and fastened with a string of primroses behind. She comes trippingly down the steep pathway that leads from the Black Castle on the windy bents, lilting to herself, as you may hear, one of those sweet ballads whose subtle and pathetic charm to a Scottish ear defies explanation or analysis.

O Logie o' Buchan! O Logie the Laird! They hae taen awa Jamie wha delved in the yard,

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Wha played on the flute and the viol sae sma'; They hae taen awa Jamie, the flower o' them a'.

Now she is upon the brink of the river—the ferry boat has fallen down the stream with the tide—her errand admits of no delay. What can she do in this extremity? She pauses and hesitates for a moment—dips her bare foot coquettishly into the water, to try if it be very cold glances round quickly to detect any naughty faun or peeping satyr, and no one being in sight, for Tom is casting at this very moment across the "saumon pot" below the linn, and We are deep in a thicket of golden gorse, "kilts her coat" without more ado round her knees, and wades demurely into the channel, shivering no doubt a little as the chill water rises about her. Oh Diana and Athene, and all chaste maidens and matrons in Pagan and Christian story, why not? The instep is no doubt finely and cleanly cut; we back the curve of that ankle any day against the Medici's—and why not? We trust and believe in our souls that there is nothing morally wrong in loving to show a pretty ankle, nor indeed, for that matter, in loving to look on one. The trim little lassie, turned of seventeen, we take it, has no doubt a very charming figure; something like Greuze's Flower Girl, you recollect; only whereas in the French girl the skirt is tucked up for no good reason that we can see, here it is kilted because she wades through the water, and very properly desires to keep her petticoat dry. That she is altogether pure and innocent, as well as pretty, no one can for a moment doubt,—even though she manifest no very grave embarrassment on finding that her aquatic feat has not been quite unwitnessed. Why should she?

So she trips through the gorse on her errand to the "toun," and we return to our reverie and our neglected volume of the morning—the last volume of Modern Painters. Mr. Ruskin's new volume is one of those superb volumes which it is pleasant even to look upon. A more charming companion for the holidays cannot be wished. The ample and lordly margin, the clear clean-cut type, the wonderful delicacy of the illustrations—so delicate that they look less like steel-engravings than flakes of sea-foam, or morning mist-entirely justify the author's somewhat superfluous assurance, that "it has not been written for money." To print, even more than to read, such a book is a rare Oriental luxury, which kings, and independent princes, and Indian proconsuls, occasionally indulge in, as they indulge in old lace, old china, and old wine.

To speak frankly, we do not believe much in criticism. What good has criticism ever done to any particular individual? What benefit to society at large can be laid to its charge?

Tell zeal it lacks devotion,

Tell love it is but lust,

Tell time it is but motion,

Tell flesh it is but dust,—

and when you have done so, what advantage have you gained or conferred? The crab is the critic of the vegetable world. He can pick a hole or two, we may be sure, in the coat of the rosy pippin or the swarthy ribston over the way, and we know of old the result. For it was this same unlucky tree that brought the "something in the world amiss" among us—the tree of the knowledge of good and evil—the tree of criticism, that is to say—the original *Edinburgh Review* taken in by Eve at the instigation of the first Whig. Ought we to imitate this bitter, peevish, perverted plant?

Historic criticism is a special nuisance. Why may I not believe in Romulus and Remus, and the gaunt she-wolf of the Tiber, if I like? That grand old poem does not do me a bit of harm. right has any musty philologist in a German university, or any Secretary of State in Downing Street, to break in pieces the cherished traditions of a hundred generations? Nay, when they are about it, why not smash the Apollo, and Uranian Venus, and Minerva the Healer, and the rest of the time-stained divinities of the Vatican? one is not a shade more false than the other; not a shade less characteristic of the temper of mind of the people who produced them, among whom they grew up, and round whose daily life they twined themselves as the ivy does round the oak. Again, why may I not hold that Mary of Scotland was true as she was beautiful? To a Scottish gentleman it is a point of honour to defend the honour of his queen; why is his soul to be disquieted by historic heresies? Why must he be pestered into the conviction that the most unhappy daughter of an unhappy house was a courtesan and a murderess? Leave us alone with our harmless

traditions; they may be false, but they cannot do you any injury, and we cannot afford to give them up; we learned them long ago, before the age of criticism dawned; they are almost the only poetry the income-tax has not crushed out of our hearts. Besides, how insecure the foundation on which the whole edifice rests! We have reversed the judgments of our fathers; will not the criticism of the next generation reverse ours, and with an equal show of authority?

Poetic criticism, to my mind, is quite as fruitless as historic. A critic never manufactured a poet: the poet, from of old, was born not made. The greatest poems recognise no formal laws,—not even the Greek tragedy, which was simply the instinctive expression of a leading Greek idea—and are great in spite of the critics and the critical canons of the day. What did the contemporary censor say to the "license" of William Shakspeare, to the "dreary" epic of Milton, to the "vulgarities" of Robert Burns? The sweetest and most simple poetry, besides, has been tortured into unmitigated nonsense. Montrose's fervid address to his mistress is translated into a political confession of faith; and Beatrice Portonari—who, even in Paradise, cannot quite forget "the cold waters of the Elsa," on whose banks Dante, in that distant life, had confessed his love—is the Church of the Apostles! Where do such people expect to go? We will be told by-and-bye, doubtless, that Lesbia,—

Illa Lesbia, quam Catullus unam
Plus quam se, atque suos amavit omnes,—

represents the Roman Republic, and Laura the Roman Pontiff.

And indeed this critical mania of our day and generation must reach a climax ere long. Even the poet has latterly ceased to be a poet, becoming a critic instead. I have the greatest possible respect for the Oxford Professor of Poetry, but I do not think he has any right to compose an article on the Greek and Gallic stage, and thereafter usher it into the world as a Tragedy.* The tragedy which he appends to his charming essay is no doubt a very clever "illustration" of the text, but it is in my opinion nothing more. illustrates the "Preface," but the preface is the book, and attests the real power and pith of the writer much more effectually than the poem, which ought to have been put into an "Appendix." piece avowedly constructed down to particular lines, by the rule and square, cannot claim to be considered an authentic work of art. It is nothing better than the "plan" which the traveller makes to verify his description; the model which the man of science exhibits to attest his theory. not so that the great poets worked. Homer did not "explain" the Odyssee; Shakspeare did not " explain " Hamlet or Macbeth.

Why should they, or why should any of us? "A thing of beauty is a joy for ever," until we begin to dissect it, and expose the ugly bones that wise Nature has bountifully concealed. Why cannot we be content to enjoy? We have the stars, and the sky, and the clouds, and the trees,

^{*} Merope, a tragedy, by Matthew Arnold, 1858.

and the sea "that bares its bosom to the moon," and the children who gather shells on its shore—what more do we need? Why cut and carve? Why cavil about the dye in Lilian's eyes, or the dimples in Lilian's cheek? Why mar by our crooked formulas the perfect symmetry of spontaneous life? There is the spring out yonder with its golden daffodils, and here are we who have been born into the midst of it—is it not enough? Let us bask in its sunshine, if you please, and so, ere the budding branches yellow, we too will grow ripe and ruddy and mellow—fit for the marriage feast of the gods.

O! rest ye, brother mariners, we will not wander more.

Yet, though we will not hurt our digestion with the bitter husks of fruitless controversies, "what song the Syrens sang, or what name Achilles assumed when he hid himself among women," it is pleasant sometimes to muse over the deep sayings of the Masters—those "jewels five words long, that, on the stretched forefinger of all time, sparkle for ever." Shakspeare's, for instance, are like those in Holy Writ. You never feel sure that you have got to the heart of the meaning. Somehow they wont exhaust.

Then, Timon, presently prepare thy grave; 'Lie where the light foam of the sea may beat Thy grave-stone daily.

What did Timon mean? He was sick of this false world, and his soul was bitter within him because of its deceit. So he would die, and make his grave beside the sea, beside the fitful margin of the sea, entombed upon the very hem of the sea.

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Why? Because the sea was fair, and fickle, and false as any woman? Because its embrace was deadly, and its smile treacherous? Or was it because he felt that that wild unrest allayed the storm that raged in his own breast? Because he could sleep better where the fierce winds howled, and sobbed, and drove the light sea-foam before them, for ever above his head?

Perhaps it was only the expression of a broad human feeling. I think most men would like to have their graves made beside the sea. The sea is so grand and glad, compared with the charnel-house. The spirit itself might haunt the spot—might dwell not unfitly along the margin of the infinite waters.

I see at this moment the place I would choose before all others.

The mountains look on Marathon, And Marathon looks on the sea:

and between the two there is a long level beach of smooth-beaten turf, dashed with gorse and fern. A single rocky island lies along the horizon, its angular peaks strangely steeped and softened in the violet light. When you lie among the gorse, with only a loose sod between you and the dead, and look through its green leaves and its golden blossoms, the radiant blues of the sky and sea absolutely startle you with their dazzling purity. There "prepare thy grave."

Come not to me again; but say to Athens, Timon hath made his everlasting mansion Upon the beached verge of the salt flood; Whom once a day, with his embossed froth, The turbulent surge shall cover. There is another of Shakspeare's sayings which I came across to-day. It is Macduff's,—"He has no children." I was reading an old commentator, who explained, in his simple garrulous way, that Macbeth was childless, and that Macduff meant to imply that if the usurper had had children of his own, he would have spared his "pretty ones." Then he would have been merciful. Nature would have triumphed over the tyrant.

I think it must be read differently.

The news has maddened Macduff, and his whole soul is athirst for revenge. The strong instinct of vengeance shews him the "Hell-kite" within his gripe, already expiating his cruel tyrannies. But even at this moment he feels that he is baulked. That is not enough to quench his feverish thirst for blood. There is only the one "Hell-kite" upon whom he can wreak his rage. He can torture a single man only, and, because this man is childless, he cannot inflict it on the weakest side of the heart. All at once he learns that his vengeance is poor, weak, inadequate. Macbeth still triumphs; Macbeth is still the stronger. "He has no children."

It is extremely likely that you will not agree with these interpretations; at least I seldom find myself able to accept the versions of other translators. Take up the commentators upon any single play—A Midsummer Night's Dream for instance—and try your conclusions with theirs.

That story of the fairy-world which Shakspeare has told us is probably the most perfect poem in the language. There it lies before us in its

integrity, a moonlight dream, with the sunset and the sunrise on either side of it. Critics, however, are profane mortals, and this charming pastoral has not been spared. Mr. Hallam, for instance, has asserted that the introduction of the Ass's head is a great artistic blunder, entirely unfitting it for representation. Would Sir Edwin Landseer pronounce the same judgment? I think not. for the requirements of the stage, that patient, sagacious, long-eared face, with its air of preternatural acuteness and solemnity, is, if adequately conceived, admirably suited. The features of any other animal would not answer so well, and for Titania's sake it is needful that some such should be found. For if she really loved the uncouth, unclean, ill-favoured Athenian weaver, the Queen of Faerie would forfeit our regard. The mésalliance would manifest so strange a lack of womanly taste and delicacy, that we could never forgive her. Even the potent juice of "love-in-idleness" would not explain the infatuation. It is the ass's head that saves Titania from disgrace, and that alone. removes her love out of the actual world, and makes it perilous no longer. There is such a delicious exquisite incongruity in her attachment to the long-eared monster, that we recognize without pain the delusion under which she labours, and disengaging her at once from any notion of responsibility, are able uninterruptedly to enjoy the charming humour of the situation.

A more considerable objection to the *Midsum-mer Night's Dream* has been stated in an elaborate paper by Mr. Halliwell. The human action, he

says, ought not to have been introduced, as its introduction prevents us from believing in the existence of the supernatural. "The man who wrought that fairy picture, and introduced into it a company of illiterate workmen, without shocking the ideal, what would he not have accomplished had he further isolated his enchantments from the external world?" This criticism appears to me singularly unhappy. Reverse the proposition, and we approach the truth. The introduction of these vulgar and unmannerly boors into that gossamer life does not lessen the sense of reality; on the contrary it intensifies it. It is the perfect contact with the common and the human that makes it possible for us to believe in the existence of the supernatural. Remove Puck, and Oberon, and Titania from this actual world, and they will "melt into air, into thin air." But bring them back to the fair brakes of wood and meadow-land, through which are visible blue visions of the Ægean, the white marble-veined capital, the Piræus with its countless masts, and fairy-land becomes possible at least! Then distribute among them beings of a different order, men of narrow culture, coarse habits, vulgar literalness, and just in proportion as it is impossible to associate the element of poetic imposture with prosaic clowns, will the conception become real, positive, substantive—a fact, and not a fiction. Were we to introduce a poet or a scholar into the fairy conclave, his imagination would at once discredit the genuineness of the scene; but no man can doubt that if Bottom's blind eyes actually saw Titania,

Titania must have been visible. If the toilet of the phlegmatic and pedantic weaver was performed by Peas-Blossom and Mustard-Seed, without his being in the least surprised or embarrassed, does not such a circumstance vouch for and attest their genuineness and authenticity more authoritatively than any other could do? Thus the art of Shakspeare is displayed, not by harmonizing "discordant materials," as Mr. Halliwell calls them, but by instinctively recognizing that they are not discordant; by feeling that Bottom explains and justifies Titania; by apprehending that the introduction of the one communicates to the other a more intense and thorough vitality.*

Another passage that has originated much controversy is the Dean of St. Patrick's,—"Only a woman's hair." Has not the Dean been somewhat hardly dealt with? In moments of extreme depression we sometimes question even Mr. Thackeray's omniscience: and has he thoroughly explained, does he thoroughly understand, the Dean? He may be quite in the right, but I am not convinced. "Only a woman's hair." Was it simply a scientific label, such as any physiologist would attach to a stuffed bird or fish in his museum? It might be, no doubt; but I think even the Dean could barely have done it. Is it not rather a testimony to us that there were, far down in that rough-hewn Irish heart, stormy deeps of pathos and tenderness deeps that he feared even a passing word or gesture might upheave, and loose in a flood of agony on his soul? He dare not touch the sore. No.

^{*} Shakspeare Society's Papers, vol. iv., art. 13.

would kill him or drive him mad. So he presses the pain sternly into his heart, and writes with a hard smile and a passionate hand, that would fain convince itself and others that it is cool, and steady, and scornful, and contemptuous—"Only a woman's hair." I dare say the hand did not tremble much, if at all; the palsy of mortal weakness was on the heart, not on the hand; grim martyrs like the Dean do not wince outwardly, even in the fire. Dante smiled, no doubt, but somewhat bitterly, when he wrote down his flaming poem La Comedia. Calantha, though "only" a woman, laughed on, too, till the heart-strings cracked.

O, my lords,
I but deceived your eyes with antic gesture,
When one news straight came huddling on another,
Of death, and death, and death, still I danced forward.
But it struck here, and here, and in an instant.

I fancy Hamlet felt somehow the same choking sensation about the throat when, in his feigned levity, though he knew that two hearts were breaking, he said to poor wistful Ophelia, "I did love you once."

Please, Mr. Thackeray, will you admit that you have judged the Dean a little hardly, and that as he was not, literally, at least, one of the beasts that perish, your explanation of his character is barely natural? If on second thoughts, however, you continue implacable, then we give in, for we cannot risk our allegiance. We are staunch as the Six Hundred to their chief.

Mr. Ruskin always shews a fine insight; yet,

for some reason or other, there is no critic against whose judgments one feels so constantly impelled to rebel. Let us look, for a moment, at one or two passages in the volume beside us.

Homer is, in Mr. Ruskin's opinion, the most literal of all poets. He never sinned as modern poets do; he adhered to the plain truth in spite of every temptation. And the passage which is selected to illustrate this proposition, is that in which Helen, seated on the Scæan gate, says to Priam:—"I see all the other Greeks, but two I cannot see—Castor and Pollux, whom one mother bore with me. Have they not followed from far Lacedæmon, or have they indeed come in their sea-wandering ships, but will not enter into the battle of men, fearing the shame and the scorn that is in me?"

Then Homer:—"So she spake, but them already the *life-giving* earth possessed, there in Lacedæmon, in the dear fatherland."

"Observe," quoth Mr. Ruskin, "the word life-giving. An inferior poet would have communicated to the earth his own emotion. But Homer sees the plain fact. The productiveness of the earth is not interrupted, though Castor and Pollux be dead." It is quite possible, certainly, that this view is correct; but, on the other hand, just as possible that a different motive tempted Homer to employ the word, which, be it remembered, is not the most natural or obvious that could be used, but requires a slight preliminary intellectual process to be gone through, before its appropriateness becomes perfectly apparent. The greenness of the earth is

a much more obvious and noticeable fact, at first sight, than its productive power, which we cannot arrive at without a certain induction. epithet, for instance, would a man, speaking the common language of the people, instinctively employ? But apart from this, did Homer select the expression, not because it was the truest and most obvious which he could find (which it was not, especially to a Greek who believed in the life of the gods, but not in the life of nature), but because he felt that he could suggest, by an artistic contrast, a train of thought profoundly affecting? The earth is life-giving; and they are dead. Earth is still our mother, the source and origin of all life, out of which spring the leaves, the flowers, the corn harvests, all the races of men; and yet the brothers are lifeless upon her breast, deaf to her voice, insensible to her caresses! Homer may have employed the word, not because he thought it his duty to state the literal fact, but because he knew the effect which a poetical artifice was calculated to produce.

So much for the Greek poet; turn now to the Italian painter. Mr. Ruskin is of opinion that the power of all landscape depends on its connection with human emotion. Without some link, however slight or local, with man, there can be no beauty or desirableness in nature, nor in any representation of it. "We find that all true landscape, whether simple or exalted, depends primarily for its interest on connection with humanity or with spiritual powers. . . . Shew that the dark clefts of the most romantic mountain are unin-

habited or untraversed; it will cease to be romantic. The essential connection of the power of landscape with human emotion is not less certain, because in many impressive pictures the link is slight or local. That the connection should appear at a single point is all that we need. The comparison with the dress of the body may be carried out into the extremest parallelism. It may often happen that no part of the figure wearing the dress is discernible, nevertheless the perceivable fact that the drapery is worn by a figure makes all the difference. In one of the most sublime figures in the world this is actually so: one of the fainting Marys in Tintoret's 'Crucifixion' has cast her mantle over her head, and her face is lost in its shade, and her whole figure veiled in folds of But what the difference is between that gray woof that gathers round her as she falls, and the same folds cast in a heap upon the ground, that difference and more exists between the power of nature through which humanity is seen, and her power in the desert."

I do not care to ask how far this doctrine is consistent with Mr. Ruskin's previous teaching, or consistent with the theory that only inferior poets apply the language of emotion to the description of nature. He says that the annunciation of this truth has been the aim of all his past work. Suppose that it has been, is the doctrine any other than the old doctrine of association, on which Lord Jeffrey wrote a most graceful essay—a doctrine against which I had fancied that Mr. Ruskin once lifted up his voice? Jeffrey held that all the

beauty in natural forms is connected with human emotion, and so came substantially to the result at which the author of *Modern Painters* now arrives. His application of the law was indeed somewhat more subtle and philosophic. Mr. Ruskin says that there must be in the landscape itself the visible link between the landscape and the emotion. Into any picture of the desert a famished Arab, for instance, must be introduced. But Jeffrey did not ask any such arbitrary interposition. "Though there is no sign of life anywhere, the desert may be beautiful to us. The bodily presence of man is not required—only the presence of his spirit. By subtlest mental laws, hard to analyse because dealing with intangible influences, and going back into the remotest years of life, he has twined strange feelings and dark sympathies around the desert forms, so that if you put him down in its midst, or place a representation of it before him, his sense of solitary and forlorn beauty will be immediately excited." It is manifest that this application is the more tenable of the two; Mr. Ruskin's indeed leading inevitably and inextricably into the mire.

But the illustration which he employs is even more fallacious than the proposition which it enforces. As the human body dignifies the dress, so the human spirit dignifies the world. A cloak is naught; but the gray woof shrouding the face of Mary touches us to the quick. It has been said that a metaphor always conceals a fallacy: the present conceals two. The dress is of course a mere accessory to the form; it plays, and is in-

tended to play, an entirely subordinate part. We do not admit that an old Roman or Venetian cloak, hanging on a peg, is necessarily an unlovely object; but it stands to reason that, as it was made to be worn, it will appear to greatest advantage when wrapped round the body. But Monte Rosa, or the acacia at the window, or the sea out yonder, are not articles of raiment; and it will be difficult to convince those who love these things, as some of us do, that their beauty and desirableness depend exclusively on their connection with the perishable emotions of men.

"But, candidly, is not the feeling with which we look upon the veiled Mary very differentdifferent, not only in degree, but in kind-from that with which we look on the veil?" Of course it is; and this is fallacy number two. Mr. Ruskin says, that in Tintoret's picture the whole form is hidden. But we know that a weeper is there; the figure, therefore, cannot be entirely concealed; and it is the grief of the woman that moves us, not the folds of the cloak. The cloak may be very skilfully painted; but we do not care much about dress at such a moment; we look past the cloak to the sorrow which it hides. Or take another illustration. A soldier has fallen in battle; a sheet is cast over the body. No limb is visible; we only know that a dead man lies there by the rigid lines of the drapery. Is it the sheet that stirs our pity, or the stricken warrior behind?

The present is, as we have seen, pre-eminently a critical age; and yet at no time, perhaps, has

there been so much loose and irrelevant criticism. A certain slovenliness of thought is probably the inevitable result of the incessant haste we are all in. We may not always agree with the classical French critics, or with the school of the Spectator, but at any rate these writers were governed by certain clear, if narrow, rules, and they tried to enforce some intelligible principles. But at present it is generally the merest "toss-up" what verdict the constitutional critic pronounces on any work submitted to him. What, for example, can illustrate more forcibly the capriciousness of our judgments than the reception which a great book of art-criticism, like Modern Painters-for with all its faults it is probably one of the greatest ever written—has received?

Here is a bundle of last week's papers; let us see, for instance, what they say on the subject.

"This is mere fine writing," one gentleman urges, "and we do not care for fine writing." Now, undoubtedly ordinary fine writing is a nuisance; but Mr. Ruskin's is not ordinary fine writing: it is the most subtle and delicate bloom of language. Even though altogether divorced from thought, it The perfect flower of could not be worthless. English speech has a substantive value of its own. These mellow sentences—pure as the Greek Psyche, musical as is Apollo's lute—are something more than the mere tools of argument; are forms of art which may be estimated and valued quite apart from any utilitarian uses which they serve. the truth is, Mr. Ruskin is a poet, and a paragraph by him is a poem, as much so as an ode by Keats, or an idyll by Tennyson. Pegasus is occasionally harnessed, no doubt; he is yoked to geometry and physical science; but the labour is evidently ungrateful, and he cannot be kept steady at the plough. And several of the poems in this closing volume are superb. There is a grand song upon the Pine, such as some gray-bearded bard in the Halls of Horsa might have sung; a glorious Greek hymn of Death and Resurrection; idylls about the leaves and the lichens and the mosses; an ode to Venice, blue and vivid as its own sea and sky.

But let Mr. Ruskin beware. His peculiar spell, though yet unbroken, is in imminent peril. stands on the brink of a precipice. He believes that he was intended by nature for a social teacher and a political guide, and that, forced to write upon art, he has missed his vocation. Let him utterly banish such a notion. He may take our word for it, that Heaven meant him to write exactly the sort of books that he has written. Only when he wanders away to attack the political economists, or to defend the theology of Mr. Maurice, does his hand forget its cunning. His Jeremiads upon the backslidings of the age are not effective. Anathema Maranatha is a form of rhetoric that belongs to the past. We should be sorry to see Mr. Ruskin transformed into a Puritan preacher. A Puritan preacher, crowned by Apollo and the Graces, is a decided anachronism. And thus it is that when Mr. Ruskin mounts the pulpit he becomes mystical and declamatory, and his style loses its subtle tenderness and liquid purity. He cannot combine with propriety John Bunyan and Giorgione.

"But Mr. Ruskin is dogmatic, arbitrary, and arrogant." Well, no doubt he is; but these are faults that lean to virtue's side, especially at present, when, as I hear, none of us have any convictions. Irresolution, we are told on all hands, is the vice of the time. Our faith is paralysed by our temperance. We tolerate because we do not believe. Now, if this doctrine be correct (mind, I do not say that it is—on the contrary, I am confident that a truer regard for man's intellectual rights, and a better understanding of individual responsibility, prevent us from burning or cursing our neighbours), Mr. Ruskin surely must be an admirable antidote. But, seriously, dogmatism is not a vice which does any harm. A man speaks or writes as one having authority. Let him do so. If his opinions are sound, he cannot announce them too confidently; if they are unsound, the arrogance with which they are stated makes the refutation sharper, keener, and speedier. a creed is carefully qualified, when a conciliatory "perhaps" or a guarded "it may be" is introduced into every sentence (and there are very few sentences now in which we do not find one or other or both) not a soul is irritated into reply, and the base coin passes without challenge into the currency.

"But then he has fallen foul of field sports." Ah, there he is clearly wrong. Such a step admits of no justification. The Saxon passion for the chase, the old Teutonic fondness for "woods and rivers," need not be vindicated. It is one of those great original or ultimate instincts about which

there cannot be any controversy. Mr. Ruskin might as profitably attack the notions of space, time, and immortality. The universal consciousness is beyond the reach of argument, and men believe in the chase as they believe in the existence of an external world. Mr. Ruskin must really withdraw his appeal. Let him consider that all mighty hunters are, like Douglas, "tender and true," sound in wind and sound in faith, good Christians and good Tories, who fear God and honour the Queen. And then let him recollect the wonderful tenderness which nature lavishes on the crack shot, be it on Scottish moor or Tyrolese Alp. We have been blessed, duck-shooting on the Lagoon, with fitful golden gleams of Venice, such as Mr. Ruskin himself never obtained. the author of Modern Painters will follow us, gun in hand, to a mountain-covert that we wot of, and as he clambers across the débris of fallen rocks in pursuit of the spotted ptarmigan who haunt the summit, forget in the passion of the sport everything about clouds and trees and rivers that he has ever written, we will bring him at length to a lonely crag, from which, on the one hand, he will look down across a fair and fertile strath, bathed in golden sunlight, rich with autumn sheaves, and washed by the sea; and on the other, into a wilderness of terrible rocks—innumerable jagged peaks, bleached by age or blackened by storm, rising one over the other beyond the sunset. But a man need not carry a gun to witness this Annunciation? Of course he must. Ten to one if you take to trespassing on these moors in search of the pictu-

resque, a shaggy red-headed Celt will have clutched you before you have gone a mile. You need be in no bodily alarm, indeed; he does his spriting gently. He will listen to your anathemas against game-preservers and game-destroyers with the suavity of a courtier, and will even go the length perhaps of assenting to your un-apostolic views against whisky-drinking, "specially pad whusky." But that crag you will never reach; a shock-headed gillie is inexorable as fate. Even if you elude him, however, it will not avail you. Nature does not reveal her loftiest loveliness to the unquiet seeker. Her best gifts are bestowed unwooed and unsolicited. It is while we watch for the wildduck, or creep down the torrent-bed upon the blackcock, it is at such moments that the gloria mundi streams through the veil, and we are permitted to gaze unchallenged upon the uncovered face of an Immortal.

Pausing here for a moment to breathe ourselves after this scramble, let me try to define in a few words, before returning to the business directly in hand, the nature and extent of our obligations to Mr. Ruskin—what he has succeeded, and what he has failed, in doing.

He has succeeded in this—that he has translated into words the wordless music of skies and leaves and streams. That mystery which haunts nature, and which the poets have striven by remote symbols to express, he has boldly set himself to analyse. The range and capacity which he has manifested in this work are perfectly unique. He

has shewn that he is familiar alike with the laws which hang the leaf upon its stem, and break the thunder-cloud upon its Alp. And his analysis is not only felicitous but novel. No such systematic examination of the structure of natural forms had ever before been attempted.

But it is objected, Cui bono? This is a book written to teach artists how to paint, and the great artists were ignorant of the laws which it unfolds. The objection is not sound. However little technical knowledge they may have had of these laws, we know that some of them had a technical knowledge of other laws, and with what result. Michael Angelo, for instance, was familiar with the anatomy of the human frame; and his magnificent truth and power are to be ascribed to this famili-He does not ostentatiously proclaim his acquaintance with physical laws; there is no manifestation of special knowledge in his work; but the surgeon tells us that the current of every vein, and the curve of every muscle, are directed by an unfaltering instinct. As he advanced in his art he probably forgot the technicalities of the science; but the thoroughness with which he had once mastered them, kept him ever afterwards out of error. As Michael Angelo studied the anatomy of the body, so ought the landscape-painter to study the anatomy of nature. Whoever forces him to undertake that study, does him a service for which he may well feel grateful. When he is brought to understand that the relation between the limbs of a tree is as determined and organic as that between the limbs of the body, he will be as liable

to put a leaf on the wrong part of its stem, as to put the hand on a wrong part of the arm. It is needless to say that our artists have not hitherto possessed such an acquaintance; and Mr. Ruskin's lessons and exhortations were consequently very necessary.

As the analyst of natural forms, and the teacher of natural laws, Mr. Ruskin has achieved a great success; but as a theorist he has failed. To a logician, Modern Painters must be an exasperating work. An air of philosophical exactness is assumed throughout; the arguments are divided and subdivided with scholastic industry; and yet the work is utterly wanting in scientific precision. The elaborate definitions are never exhaustive; and the more indefinite definitions are accumulated, the more profound is the confusion which they produce, and the greater the trouble into which they bring their maker. With all his capacity for ingenious analysis, he often misses the most obvious link in the argument—the link which lies on the surface, and needs no seeking. If Mr. Ruskin's design in the speculative part of his book has been to produce what he calls "a wholesome state of not knowing what to think," in the reader, he may undoubtedly congratulate himself on the result.

It is not difficult to account for this failure. His intellect has undergone no complete nor systematic training. He is obviously ignorant of the very rudiments of metaphysics, and he often sets himself to confute sophisms which have been dead for generations. At other times the most

splendid declamation, and the most subtle rhetorical art, are employed to veil a truism, or decorate a caprice. In Modern Painters, indeed, we may be said to watch the progress of his education, and the varying influences which have moulded his mind, from the time when he worshipped Wordsworth and Walter Scott, to the time when he dare not read Keats—" so discontented he makes me with my own work." This complete subjugation is a very anomalous feature in a man of first-rate powers, and probably accounts for a good deal that is weak in Mr. Ruskin's intellectual Like Mr. Gladstone, he surrenders character. himself without restraint to the tyrannical caprice of the moment. Such a temper is essentially fanatical, and ought to be very carefully guarded against—entirely inconsistent as it is with the just judgment, the sound sense, and the exquisite balance of the faculties, which characterise the sovereign thinkers. It may lead a mob or a creed to victory; but it cannot write an Iliad, a Hamlet, or a Faust.

Thus, ignorant of principles, afraid of truth, we "nibble" at any really original and earnest book. But the indolence and slovenliness of our criticism have been exhibited even more plainly throughout the course of that great debate on literary larceny, which the poetry of one of the soundest of critics, if not of poets, has occasioned.

The public somehow cannot be induced to regard the misdemeanour with due severity; and the public, for once, is, perhaps, not so far wrong

as its Gamaliels. To tell the truth, Shakspeare has made this kind of conveyancing an English tradition. Poor drunken Greene, indeed, over his sour Rhenish wine, endeavoured to convince his countrymen that stealing was not lawful, and that, in consequence, his great rival was "an upstart crow bedecked in peacock's feathers;" the peacock being Robert Greene, and the crow William Shakspeare. Hos ego versiculos feci, tulit alter honores. The attempt failed; the common sense of the country was too strong for Greene. might be many King Lears before Shakspeare wrote, and whole passages from the old play might be transferred into his; but still, the one was distinctively Shakspeare's Lear, and the other was We can compare the plays side by side yet —they are both in print; but it is impossible to lay our hands on that which makes the one an altogether different thing from the other. is the vestal fire that turns their dross into his gold? We cannot tell. We only know by instinct that, in the one case, a master mind has been at work among the chambers of the old man's brain, and, with the rude materials furnished by the other, has constructed a picture—the tempestuous but impotent passion of an uncrowned king-which will fade not while time endures.

But again, what is this nineteenth century but the living result of some four or five thousand years? We are our father's sons. Our whole moral and intellectual life is derivative—derived from those who have lived and thought before us in the olden time. A man cannot escape from these influences if he would, and there is no good reason why he should make the attempt. original in the way required, the poet should be shut up from childhood, like Miranda on her desert island, and allowed no companion except Any contact with his fellows, or with the external world, must be scrupulously avoided, else he will catch the infection. He must shut his eyes, close his nostrils, and seal his ears with wax, like the Greek hero. Mr. Smith fortunately, like every other poet worthy of the name, has had a different kind of education; he has read our older and later dramatists, Shakspeare, Dryden, Pope, Shelley, Keats, Tennyson; and all these great English thinkers have, as might be expected, influenced and moulded his mind. This is the inevitable result of being born in the nineteenth century; it might have been different had he been the Greek Homerus, and not the English or the Scottish Smith; but I am not confident, for I rather suspect that Homer was by habit and repute a thief, and cribbed without the slightest compunction from every old ballad that came in his way, and that would serve his purpose.

The principle by which what is, and what is not, plagiarism falls to be determined, is so simple that it is difficult to understand how the confusion of mind, which the entire absence of parallelism between the "parallel passages," with which we have been favoured, indicates, could have been produced. A poet is not a plagiarist when he introduces words and objects into his poetry which have been previously in use. The sea, the

stars, the flowers, have been introduced into all poetry. If two distinct pictures, therefore, are painted of these objects, and if the two communicate distinct impressions, the one cannot be said to be copied from the other. Something more is needed to constitute plagiarism. The *ideas* must resemble; the point of view must be the same. Virgil's—

Purpureus veluti cum flos succisus aratro Languescit moriens—

is a palpable imitation of a celebrated passage in Catullus; and Shakspeare's

Sleep thou, and I will wind thee in my arms, So doth the woodbine the sweet honeysuckle Gently entwist; the female ivy so Enrings the barky fingers of the elm;

is only an adaptation of the Roman poet's-

Lenta qui velut assitas Vitis implicat arbores, Implicabitur in tuum Complexum.*

These appropriations, natural, and [as in Shak-speare's case, whose "little Latin" was probably insufficient to enable him to read the Epithalamium,] inevitable though they may be, are manifest infringements of copyright; and, as such, may be condemned by those who do not feel that the world would be poorer had it lost either. But the passages which have been used to convict the modern poet are very different—the only noticeable resemblance in most instances being

^{*} See Mr. Martin's delightful illustrations, appended to his translation of *The Poems of Catullus*, pp. 157, 180.

that the ravisher and the ravished alike use "our English;" and that the clouds, and the stars, and the sea, and the sun, which had been alluded to by Shelley, and Byron, and Keats, and Wordsworth, are also alluded to by Mr. Smith.*

* Take, for instance, the example most frequently dwelt upon. Cyril Torneur is represented to have said—

The weeping sea, like one Whose milder temper doth lament the death Of him whom in his rage he slew, runs up The shore, embraces him, kisses his cheek, Goes back again, and forces up the sand To bury him.

And Alexander Smith, says—

The bridegroom sea
Is toying with the shore, his wedded bride,
And in the fulness of his marriage joy
He decorates her tawny brow with shells,
Retires a space to see how fair she looks,
Then proud runs up to kiss her.

The natural effect (and that is not copyright) which both poets use, is the alternate advance and retreat of the waves. But it is used for radically different purposes. In the one case the sea is supposed to have slain the land, and is engaged in conducting its victim's interment; in the other case, the sea, that has been wed immemorally to the land, decorates his bride's brow with jewel-like shells, retires to admire, and then returns to embrace his tawny mistress. The old poet makes the sea a murderer; the modern, a bridegroom. that the impressions which the natural phenomenon produces upon the mind in the two passages are radically distinct—having nothing in common. All that the accusation, therefore, can amount to, is that the suitableness of the phenomenon for poetic purposes became more apparent when it had once been employed. But then it had been employed by generations of poets before Cyril Torneur was heard of—the love-sick sea has been engaged in kissing and hugging the shore from the time of the patriarchs. Another objection to the relevancy of the indictment may be found in the fact that the passage, as quoted, entirely misrepresents the author's meaning. neur is not by any means responsible for the trash which has been

The Rev. John Mitford published many years ago an edition of Gray's poems, with critical notes, which are calculated to produce a perfectly appalling effect upon the mind. In the first place, they are eight or ten times more extensive than the text which they illustrate; and, in the second place, they seem to prove that not a single line was written by the ostensible author. Gray cribbed from Pope, Pope from Dryden, Dryden from Milton, Milton from the Elizabethan dramatists, the Elizabethan dramatists from the Latin classics, the Latin classics from the Greek, "and so on, ad infinitum." Every poetic phrase used by the modern poet may be traced back into the dingiest "The purple year" is the "purpurantem annum" of Apuleius; "and snatch a fearful joy" is the "gaudia pallent" of Statius; "grimvisaged comfortless despair," is "the grim and comfortless despair" of Shakspeare; "the pangs unfelt before," are "the pangs unfelt before" of Milton; "they mock the air with idle state," is Shakspeare's "mocking the air with colours idly spread" in King John; Pope's "the glory of the priesthood and the shame," is taken from Oldham's (who took it from Chamberlayne), "the glory and the scandal of the age;" and "Satan bowing low his gray dissimulation," in Paradise Regained, is from Ford's Broken Heart—" Lay by thy whining gray dissimulation." And thus it goes

put into his mouth. Had the entire passage been quoted, it would have appeared that the sea did not "slay," "kiss," or "embrace" the shore, but a drowned soldier, whose body had been cast on the beach!

on through three hundred mortal pages; until one feels that the chief business of the poets of every age and nation has consisted in appropriating the property of their neighbours. Yet, after all is said—after we have learned anew that Virgil wrote "lumenque juventæ purpureum," and Ovid, "purpureus Amor," and that Milton and Shakspeare, and Callimachus and Homer, have been pillaged in turn—we yet return with the early delight to the almost perfect lines, and admire as much as of old their fresh and charming grace,-

> O'er Idalia's velvet-green The rosy-crowned Loves are seen On Cytherea's day: With antic Sport, and blue-eyed Pleasures, Frisking light in frolic measures: Now pursuing, now retreating, Now in circling troops they meet; To brisk notes in cadence beating, Glance their many-twinkling feet. Slow melting strains their Queen's approach declare; Where'er she turns, the Graces homage pay; With arms sublime that float upon the air In gliding state she wins her easy way; O'er her warm cheek, and rising bosom move The bloom of young Desire and purple light of Love.

Virgil's *Incessu patuit Dea* may be as unapproachable as Grisi's Casta Diva; yet both Gray and Titiens are striking and finished performers, and it is a real delight to listen to them.

Yet notwithstanding the indolence and helplessness of much of our criticism, a change for the better has come over it—a change, however, mainly

to be attributed to the influence of one or two bold and original thinkers, like Wordsworth and Carlyle. I think that, upon the whole, we have been brought to shew—nay, even to feel—a greater reverence for plain truth.

The triumph of the realistic school of Artists has been pretty complete of late; though naturalism has not yet been carried to the extreme that John Lily desired, "and methinketh, Apelles, were you as cunning as report says you are, you may paint flowers as well with sweet smells as fresh colours, observing in your mixture such things as should draw near to their savours." We are all Præ-Raphaelites. Mr. Millais' gawky girls, and Mr. Dyce's skinny saints, have gained the day. The fair and noble matronhood of Sir Joshua, and the princely simplicity and lustre of Gainsborough, have grown quite dim in our eyes. That was the England of Mrs. Crew, and Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire: our England prefers a charity-scholar with chubby cheeks and bare legs, or a bit of misty hill-side, or a clump of Scotch firs stained with Not that we are altogether wrong, by sunset. any means. The old mythological pictures—the Hours, and the Muses, and the Graces—were, it must be confessed, hideously tiresome; and the artist had become so careless in his observation and reproduction of natural forms, that it was a chance whether Mr. Ruskin could tell a cauliflower from a cabbage in his pictures. sacred Seasons might not be disturbed;" yet are they gone. The kindly old-fashioned Seasons, that we all remember so well—Summer, seated on

her tawny pard, and Autumn, crowned with yellow sheaves, and gray-bearded Winter, shivering in his bear-skin coat—have been clean swept away, and men of fine genius expend more "tender" labour on the berries of the mountain ash, than on the blue eyes of Lalage. Why not? Magna est veritas. Let us be true, and sincere, and conscientious, however dreadfully unpleasant we may make ourselves.

But it is ungracious to utter a single word that may be construed, even by remote implication, into a sneer at pictures, that, in honesty, we hold in all honour. To paint a leaf truly is a good thing; to touch the heart is a better; and many of our Præ-Raphaelites can do both. We may smile at the stiff and quaint formality of their earlier work, if we like; in so far as it was purely imitative and scholastic—an endeavour to reproduce Cimabue and Fra Angelico in the nineteenth century—it did not merit our gratitude; but in so far as it indicated an honest desire to represent "the meanest flower" with essential accuracy, it did. The knowledge then acquired has not remained unfruitful. Time and experience have matured it it into a regulating instinct—the instinct which rejoices when law is obeyed, which is hurt when law is transgressed. And one could see, even then, that a sweet and powerful fancy was at work—a fancy which sought a freer expression, and more "liberal applications." The first pictures of the school were stubbornly prosaic; in the later, the presence of a fine and rare faculty is made manifest. Rossetti's Guinevere at Oxford, where the phantom queen rises between the unfaithful knight and the San-Greal, and keeps the coveted blessing from his grasp: Hunt's great Christ in the Temple, and his strange picture of the sacrificial goat, plodding wearily, through the quaking wilderness, towards the bitter Sea: Wallis' Chatterton, where the white ghost of the morning casts its cold light upon the yet warm clay, and the martyr-face calmed in death, and the tawdry garret, from which the Immortal has escaped now: the pale, passionate, imploring woman-child in the Huguenot, who is yet so glad and proud in her despair of the man who durst not lie by a gesture even for her: the fawn-eyed sisters gathering their wonderful Autumn Leaves in the mystical glory of the twilight: the ineffable rapture of the mother, when she stretches out her suppliant hands towards her infant daughters, who—God be thanked !—are safe once more, though the fire still crimsons, with its red light, their smiling trustful faces, and the white night-gear, in which they lay in each other's arms, and dreamt together of the angels who tended their innocent slumber:—these are pictures where the imagination is triumphant. Yet they are all rigorously truthful—so truthful, that adverse criticism insists that they are little better than photographs. But even a fern-leaf or a rose-bud, painted by such a hand, is a very different thing from the fern-leaf or the rose-bud which comes out of the photographer's box. A photograph is a blind transcript from nature; but, in the most literal picture, the imagination binds the blossoms and stirs among the leaves.

The triumph of the realistic school has been nearly as complete in Poetry as in Art. An immeasurable gulf divides the age which could relish "the great Mr. Congreve's" stilted and artificial tribute to "Anna's mighty mind," from that which recognises, in the simple and honest words that Alfred Tennyson addresses to his Queen, a truer spirit of loyalty. In Poetry, too, as elsewhere, the old mythologies have "undergone the earth." The Spirit that had her haunt "by dale, or piny mountain, or forest, by slow stream, or pebbly spring," has vanished, and left no trace of her whereabouts. Where are Oberon and Titania? There is no moonlight now like that in the Midsummer Night's Dream. Never a witch rides to the "Brocken" on her broom; and when, in its mystic cauldron, her black broth simmers upon the stage, the gods laugh. Even the Hobgoblin has lost faith in himself, and cracks a jest upon his own nose. Phillis, and Daphne, and Lavinia, have been forsaken by their swains. Our "Bridge of Sighs" crosses the unromantic, if not unmemorable river, which supplies Barclay and Perkins'.

It was about time indeed that the romantic school should be abolished, when Mrs. Radcliffe and Monk Lewis had come to be its apostles. The thing had entirely worn itself out: it was as dead as the Dead Sea, and the sooner it was put out of the way the better. The fairy world had been unpeopled; which it was not to Shakspeare, though he rather inclines occasionally to quiz Peas-Blossom and Mustard-Seed. But Shakspeare had as real a faith in that world as in any

other;* it did not strike him with any sense of strangeness. Theseus, no doubt, declares—"I never may believe these antique fables and these fairy toys;" but the Master himself must be held to reply, in the words of Hippolyta, that even the tricks of the imagination are never altogether without warrant; and that, when thus transfigured, the story of the night—

"More witnesseth than fancy's images,
And grows to something of great constancy:
But, howsoever, strange and admirable."

Yet even Shakspeare rarely gives us more than a glint of moonlight. Ariel and Titania are very well in their way; but Englishmen need coarser food: moonbeams will not fill the stomachs of mortals; and so, with his delightful ease, he turns the page, and the strong colourless light falls upon doughty burghers, and patriotic kings, and the passions which consume Lear, and Othello, and Juliet.

That the recoil has been somewhat excessive need not be denied. Reactions always are; and Mr. Buckle will be succeeded by a fanatical

* Shakspeare believed in omens. One cannot read Julius Casar or Richard the Third without being sure of it. He is never more in earnest than when he describes the warning—never more tragic than when he relates how the trifle, as it seemed, was disregarded, and the history of an empire and of the world turned into a different channel.

I do remember me—Henry the Sixth
Did prophesy that Richmond should be king
When Richmond was a little peevish boy.
A king!—perhaps——

weaver, or an ultramontane priesthood. Wordsworth has a good deal to answer for in this respect. Steeped in poetry, the bard of Rydal was yet utterly destitute of the faculty of selection, and he always shewed himself quite unable to appreciate the natural suitableness, and the relative proportions, of the subjects on which he worked. The result was, that in vindicating the real, he not unfrequently descended to what was essentially mean, trivial, and prosaic. Most of his disciples have kept in his track. The delicate revelries of the imagination, the stately discourse of kings and heroes, Belinda's charming burlesque, the polished couplet and the ringing epigram, have been exchanged for the sorrows of an idiot, or the amours of the nursery-maid. The fair humanities of old religion, nay, even the ladies and gentlemen in the drawing-room, are scrupulously avoided, and the poet seeks the angel of the house in the scullery or behind the bar. This wretched mistake discredits the reformation. Homeliness is not necessarily poetic. It is pure caprice and wantonness to single out the ignoble incident in an ignoble career. The man who does so wilfully cripples his art. The most exquisite genius is needed to conceal the essential meanness and poverty of many of the situations which Wordsworth selects; and, with all his enthusiasm, he fails to invest them with interest. Whereas a great theatrethe Thermopylæ Pass, the Plain of Marathon or of Troy—warms the imagination. It rouses the fire in the reader, and he comes prepared to own and to obey the spell.

The true domain of poetry may be said, in this aspect, to lie somewhere between the photograph and fairy-land. Neither fairy nor photograph is touched by the authentic passion of the imagination; and, deprived of *its* heat, poetry dies. The nobler incidents of history (using the word in its widest sense) are thus the materials which the poet must use, and, for our part, we are disposed to hold that these incidents should be chosen from the past rather than from the present.

Not that we by any means acquiesce in the opinion that the present time is necessarily prosaic. Every age has its own romance; and scraps of that romance are sometimes visible to, and sung by, the contemporary poets. The Charge of the Light Brigade is already classic as one of Homer's No tragedy in past history causes a thrill such as stirred Europe, the other day, when its greatest statesman died. Cavour's whole life. indeed, is a poem—none the less fascinating because the purity of his patriotism did not shrink from base allies and obscure intrigue. He may, like Robert Bruce, have deeply sinned; but he was true to freedom, and he died for his nation. It is impossible to touch pitch with impunity; but it cannot be said to defile the man who devotes his life with incorruptible fidelity to a great cause, as it defiles the man whose aims are sordid and whose ambition is mean. The character of Cavour may continue to perplex the judgment of the formal moralist; but the higher and more religious instinct strikes home, detects the royal manhood

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behind, and pronounces an unfaltering absolution:—

De Bruce, thy sacrilegious blow
Hath at God's altar slain thy foe;
O'ermastered yet by high behest,
I bless thee, and thou shalt be bless'd!

And even the real life immediately about us still keeps its pathos. Love, anger, jealousy, despair, are potent under Victoria, as under Agamemnon or Lear. Such materials can the passing time furnish to the Tragic Muse; and for Comedy—have we not a whole island of Irishmen?

At the same time, as we have intimated, we incline to prefer the claim of History. When a poem possesses a historical basis, the risk of caricature is diminished. The poet who spins his web out of his own brain for any long time, "gangs aft agee;" whereas the poet who relies upon the facts which the unimaginative annalists of a people have recorded, is protected against the deceitfulness of the imagination, and brought back incessantly to reality. And, moreover, an event, as a whole and in its completeness, may be viewed with better effect when removed a little way from The pressure of the crowd partly conceals its proportions; but, in the silence of the night-season, what is poetic in the story is disengaged from its casual environment, grows plainer and more distinctly articulate.

That these are the conclusions at which the imaginative workers of our day have arrived, or are arriving, is, I think, pretty clear. Every day the principle, that the simple truth is the mark to

which the poet and the artist must press forward, is becoming more widely recognised. The fanaticism on which a new doctrine is always at first forced to rely, has already, in the case of the artist, been subdued into sense; and Pre-Raphaelitism has ceased to be a caricature. The poet, too, begins to acknowledge the influence of common sense. He has learned that though fact, pur et simple, is the first requisite to be aimed at, yet that the truth of life is not incompatible with the dignity of history; and is none the worse, as in the Idylls of the King and Edwin of Deira, of a rich setting and a noble arena. He does not feel contempt for the dweller in the cottage; but the simple sorrows of poverty do not prevent him from witnessing and recording the keener pangs that are often felt in the palace. The law of selection which, in all such cases, requires to be observed, Human emotion is the is exceedingly plain. subject-matter of poetry. The intensity of an emotion is the gauge of its poetic worthiness; for every genuine emotion is in its deeps poetic. The larger sweeps of a man's heart always beat against the invisible shores of the imagination. or selfish passion is inflexibly prosaic; but the same passion, dilating to the contemplation of a great virtue or a great sacrifice, instantly acquires the elements which fit it for the uses of the poet. "The uneventful annals of the poor" are, consequently, less likely to involve those forms of feeling which are most distinctly capable of poetic treatment, than the vivid triumphs and the keen pains of history. "The threads of doom" are woven into a grayer woof under the thatched roof of the beggar's hovel. Love and hate, no doubt, abide there as elsewhere; but they are narrower in their sway, and more selfish in their origin, than the love and hate which animate the martyr who dies for religion, or the martyr who dies for freedom; the hero who is crushed by the heel of the tyrant, or the hero who drives the arrow into the tyrant's heart; the king who leads his people to victory at Bannockburn, or who perishes with them at Thermopylæ. Poetry may glorify, as it has glorified, both; but its task will be harder and less congenial in the one case than in the other, and it will sometimes fail, infected by the meanness which it cannot rouse into virtue, or translate into sacrifice.

Yet Mr. Ruskin has said, not without apparent reason, that there is a certain falseness in modern poetry which we do not find in the older schools. The "pathetic fallacy"—which he regards as characteristically modern, and as implying a degree of weakness in the poet who resorts to it—is produced by applying the terms which are primarily and correctly applicable to human emotion only, to the phenomena of external nature. When Keats, describing a wave, says—

Down whose green back the short-lived foam, all hoar, Bursts gradual with a wayward indolence,—

he is stating what is not true, seeing that foam is neither active nor indolent, and that sloth is a quality of the mind which cannot be attributed to inanimate existence.

Now, a good many answers may be found to the charge which Mr. Ruskin has sought to It may probably be said by some that what he calls a false effect is really an effect produced by a very true and legitimate association. Is there not a natural and deeply rooted connection between the physical and the moral world? May not the forms of the one be rightly associated with the feelings of the other? "All things are double, one against another, and God hath made nothing imperfect." And this law is yet more directly applicable to those natural forms—the wave, the river, the waterfall, the cloud—which are perhaps most precious to the poetical temperament. For the motion of insensible objects can only be fully and adequately described by words borrowed from, and originally applied to the qualities of active being. When the earth is perfectly still, we do not feel any absolute necessity to introduce this phraseology, but when, in the rush of the rapid, and the fall of the wave, it ceases to be passive, we cannot describe the kind of motion, picturesquely or graphically, except by the employment of expressions originally limited to the movements of an active will. Language was probably at first constructed upon the notion that everything is stationary and soulless in nature, except the man who has been created to enjoy it. So that when the poet goes forth, and finds that there is a subtle and intricate relation between the foam of the river, or the blackness of the thunder-cloud, and certain emotions of his own mind, he is necessarily compelled—not from any poetical affectation or caprice, but out of a pure and noble instinct—to extend the words, which describe the movements in the spiritual, to the corresponding movements in the natural world. And so true is this, that we discover in the common speech of all nations numberless phrases used in this inverted way, thereby shewing that such an employment of them is felt to be essential to the fulness and efficiency, not merely of the poetical, but of the national tongue. The waywardness of the wave, the moaning of the restless wind, and such like, are expressions wrought into the structure of almost every language; first introduced, it may be, by the poet, but universally accepted, because men, having reached a certain stage of cultivation, had created associations, and discovered connections, which they could not express in their simpler and more primitive speech. If this be true, are we not entitled to say that the strongest man, and the most sagacious poet, may sometimes, without weakness, in Mr. Ruskin's eloquent words, "talk to the wayside flowers of his love, or to the fading clouds of his ambition?"

Such an argument seems sound enough; and, if it be so, the employment of the "pathetic fallacy" by the Modern Poet cannot be taken to indicate any distaste for truth. On the contrary, such an association being legitimate, and indeed inevitable, abstinence from the use of emotional language may be held to demonstrate the absence of any deep, any passionate, regard for natural beauty. But it will be well to pause, and consider the matter a little before arriving at this con-

For there can be no doubt that it is the clusion. weakest poets who habitually resort to this form of With them at least its use becomes an Euphuism is the constant employment of unnatural and passionate comparisons on trivial occasions; and the intricate, involved, and arbitrary analogies which pleased the rhymers of the Restoration, who were on that account rather wits than poets, are quite as offensive as Euphuism. Yet, though an art be abused by those who practice it, it is not necessarily vicious; and when we consider what English poetry was in the days of Lily, of Cowley, and even of Pope, we will, I think, be disposed to hold that the sensational phraseology of our modern poets indicates fondmess for the true, and not for the false. in short, is the only safe or adequate criterion. The "fallacy" is not always a fallacy. Sometimes the language is the natural language of When so used, it is right to use it. when there is no such necessity; when the association is strained, unnatural, and grotesque; when the poet is not in earnest; then it is foolish to employ it, and its employment indicates feebleness of imagination, and radical untruthfulness. the poets of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries are the guilty parties, not those of the nineteenth.

Here is a specimen of the manner in which the poets of the Stewarts used this language. I only copy one passage, but a volume might be filled with passages precisely similar. The Poet Laureate of that age thus addresses Light—

284 A CRITIC ON CRITICISM.

First-born of chaos, who so fair didst come,
From the old Negro's darksome womb,
Which, when it saw the lovely child,
The melancholy mass put on kind looks and smiled.

Hail! active nature's watchful light and health,
Her joy, and ornament, and wealth,
Hail to thy husband heat, and thee,
Thou the world's beauteous bride, the lusty bridegroom he!

This is very lamentable. We can see at a glance that the man who wrote these lines was not in earnest; that he was not engrossed by his subject; that he did not care whether he spoke the truth or lied; that he was only trying how dexterous and ingenious he could be; and that, in consequence, wanting tact, restraint, and imaginative fervour, he made an idiot of himself, and soiled and degraded his subject.

Mr. Ruskin holds up Mr. Tennyson, among modern poets, as a warning on this matter. let us now contrast with this passage from Cowley, one or two specimens of the "pathetic fallacy," taken from the works of Queen Victoria's laureate. No one, I think, can read these works without admitting that, in them, this form of speech occurs comparatively seldom; that, when it does occur, it is always founded upon a vivid recognition of the natural relation between the object and the emotion; and that it is never introduced except during the occurrence of some strong and overpowering excitement. Occurring in these circumstances, we hesitate to accept a doctrine which declares that it is, in all circumstances, a sign of feebleness or incapacity.

Every reader of poetry recollects the wonderful lines in *Ænone*:—

It was the deep mid-noon; one silvery cloud Had lost its way between the piney sides
Of this long glen. Then to the bower they came;
Naked they came to that smooth-swarded bower,
And at their feet the crocus broke like fire,
Violet, amaracus, and asphodel,
Lotos and lilies; and a wind arose,
And overhead the wandering ivy and vine,
This way and that, in many a wild festoon
Ran riot.

This is a noble example of the "pathetic fallacy;" but observe how strictly it obeys the conditions which have been laid down. In the first place, it is not a speculative philosopher who speaks, but the forsaken Ænone, half-crazed with tears; and the event which stirs the pulse of nature is no trivial interview of rustic lovers, but the unveiled presence of the fair Immortals themselves. in Lady Godiva there is another example of a similar kind, illustrating the same conditions. Lady Godiva, "clothed on with chastity," and no garment beside, rides through Coventry; and the epithets which, if applied to external objects on ordinary occasions, would appear utterly incongruous, now become, when appropriated by the womanly feelings of modesty and shame, perfectly natural and expressive:—

> The deep air listened round her as she rode, And all the low wind hardly breathed for fear. The little wide-mouth'd heads upon the spout Had cunning eyes to see:—the blind walls Were full of chinks and holes, and overhead Fantastic gables crowding stared.

Again, in *The Talking Oak* the flowers are gifted with feeling. But here, where there is no intensity of emotion, it is interesting to notice that it is the garrulous old oak itself from which the words proceed, and we must therefore obviously regard them in connection with the pleasant and playful fancifulness which has dictated the form of the poem:—

And light as any wind that blows,
So fleetly did she stir,
The flower, she touch'd on, dipt and rose,
And turn'd to look at her.

The most common form of the "pathetic fallacy," as we have seen, is the association with external objects of an emotion which in themselves they do not possess. But, on the other hand, it has sometimes the effect of making the external fact less spiritual and more material; so that a great poet may reach, by the aid of an imaginative detail, an almost primitive literalness.

A carol free and bold,
As when a mighty people rejoice
With shawms, and with cymbals, and harps of gold,
And the tumult of their acclaim is rolled
Through the open gates of the city afar,
To the shepherd who watches the evening star.

The misappropriation of ideas which is apparent in this passage, may be the work either of a very powerful imagination, or of a very primitive and homely culture. An ordinary poet would merely have said, "a tumultuous shouting arose, and was borne hither from the city," and the statement would have commended itself to a man of comparative cultivation. But the great poet sees the

flushed faces in the market-place; and the thoroughfares leading from the centre of the city to its walls; and the gateways by which the country people come home at night to quiet farmhouses among the green fields—and all these windings and turnings he associates with the swift march of sound, as a material body, to the shepherd who watches on the hill-side.*

Mr. Ruskin urges another complaint against the Modern Poet. He does not colour with truthfulness; on the contrary, his colouring is "inaccurate" and "rich to excess." Neither on this point is it possible to agree with the critic. cepting one or two of his earlier and more immature productions, I do not think that Mr. Tennyson has ever shewn any excessive affection for colour. Even when his subject requires a rich hue, it is always used unobtrusively, and there is never any artificial glare in it. It is moreover worth observing, that the most gorgeous and elaborate colouring is chiefly devoted to comparatively minute objects—a rose, a jewel, or a sword-hilt; just as we find on the golden petal, or within the purple dome of the flower, the bloom and concentration, as it were, of those rich colours which, in the larger combinations of nature, the sky, the mountain, the

There is in many of Mr. Tennyson's works that relish for a wild, sombre, and clouded landscape which Mr. Ruskin believes to be characteristically modern. But he has a peculiar—even a Greek—love for distinctness and quietness in natural combinations, and his description of the mist of the mountain, or the mystery of the cataract, is not more perfect, than his description of the squared lawn, the crisp woods, the strutting peacocks, and the measured fall of the fountains, around an old-fashioned English manor-house.

cloud, are subdued and graduated into an infinite variety of more delicate and tender tints. And, again, his complete command over the simplest, as over the richest colours, is very noticeable.

Hard by a poplar stood alway,
All silver green, with gnarled bark;
For leagues no other tree did mark
The level waste, the rounding gray.
And ever when the moon was low,
And the shrill winds were up and away,
In the white curtain to and fro
She saw the gusty shadow sway.
But when the moon was very low,
And wild winds bound within their cell,
The shadow of the poplar fell
Upon her bed, across her brow.

There is a peculiar fascination in this exquisite passage. The poplar sways to and fro against the curtain, while the warm wind of the early night is blowing; its still shadow, when the wind has sunk and the night is far spent, lies like a bar across the white brow of the sleeping girl. It cannot fail to remind us of the triple-arched casement in *The Eve of St. Agnes*, where, among "stains and splendid dyes,"

as are the tiger-moth's deep damask'd wings—
A shielded 'scutcheon blushed with blood of queens and kings.
Full on the casement shone the wintry moon,
And threw warm gules on Madeline's fair breast
As down she knelt for Heaven's grace and boon;
Rose bloom fell on her hands, together prest,
And on her silver cross soft amethyst,
And on her hair a glory like a saint.

In this passage there is a tropical accumulation of superb colours—"rose bloom," "soft amethyst," the "damask'd wings of the tiger-moth," "the

blushing blood of queens and kings;" in the other not one brilliant colour—nothing but the poorest light and shade—the white curtain, the white moonlight, the black shadow of the poplar: and yet Tennyson, by the artistic disposition of his scanty materials, is probably more affecting than, and certainly quite as effective as, Keats.

The complaint we have been considering affirms that Tennyson uses too much colour: we think it might be as correct to say that he does not use colour as often as he might, and on occasions when most other men would—preferring to substitute in its place a subtle epithet, which through some remote and intricate association produces a greater impression than could perhaps be got out of any colour whatever.

Three silent pinnacles of aged snow.

Or,

- "The highest-mounted mind," he said,
- "Still sees the sacred morning spread
 The silent summit overhead."

There is no colour there; yet how much finer than any colouring could have made it, is "the silent summit!" How completely it expresses the peculiar nobleness of that clear sharp line stretched along the pale dawn, and rising above the still and sacred hills—still at all times, but most affectingly so in the profound serenity of the early morning! Would not the introduction of any colour sully the purity of that inviolate and virginal repose? Silence is sometimes more effective than speech—as in Montrose's dying appeal. "He lifted up his face, without any word speaking."

Thus we do not on all occasions agree with Mr. Ruskin. But—de gustibus—it is only a matter of taste—and on matters of taste one cannot feel very keenly, or write very bitterly. Mr. Ruskin, indeed, would fain persuade us that we are responsible for the eye as well as for the heart, and that Art is a master of grave aspect and awful mien. But it is difficult, somehow, to persuade easy-going English people that such is the Lord Palmerston, they fancy, may make a decent minister, though his taste be as corrupt as his own Foreign Office; and, for our part, we have not the heart to quarrel with our worthy neighbour, the retired tea and coffee merchant next door, who has erected a hideous pagoda in his back-green. The snowy-limbed, soft-hearted, Aphrodite, is the queen of the gentle craft—not the stiff Minerva, or the vestal Dian.

day; and now, as the evening gathers, the boom of the sea sounds sad and far-remote, the sandy bents have changed to flowery meadow-lands, and we enter at length the lordly chase, through which, for many a mile, the river winds from its fountain among the pines up yonder. The roses in my Lady's garden are still black with winter frosts. The Naiad, with her empty horn, looks dry and disconsolate, and as if she too would not unwillingly follow the elder gods from a planet that owns no more the divinity of Pan. The swans upon the lake are bearing down with ruffled wings before the evening breeze, and the last rays of the

sun touch gorgeously with gold and purple the cock-pheasant who sweeps silently past us to his roost. The white pillars of the still Greek shrine are repeated in the still water; while the echoes of a fantastic Tivoli die among the woods on which the crimson crown of the evening rests. Fair and pleasant and peaceful, and haunted by the cushat, as when we were boys—

But oh! for the touch of a vanished hand, And the sound of a voice that is still.





OUR ROMANCE.

A LETTER FROM LANCELOT.

Let us alone! Time driveth onward fast, And in a little while our lips are dumb. Let us alone! What pleasure can we have To war with evil? Is there any peace In ever chimbing up the climbing wave?

THE LOTUS EATERS.

IT is a pity that Lancelot has left us. He was undoubtedly a clever fellow in his way. His friends anticipated a brilliant career for him, at the bar or in the senate. I am not certain that their anticipations would have been realized. He was rather one of those men who, with cultivated taste, sparkling cleverness, infinite fluency, and an intimate acquaintance with the social forms of English literary and political life in the present century, are peculiarly fitted to become the satirists of a party, or the wits of a boudoir, but certainly not poets of wide fame, or statesmen of commanding genius. Such men are now more numerous than we are altogether aware, and though seldom appearing formally before the

public, do yet unquestionably exert a certain covert influence upon the fastidious and effeminate civilization, from which they spring, and to which they peculiarly belong.

Lancelot being a clever man, was of course a little bit of a gourmand, morally and physically. He was not exactly a sensualist, or at least his sensualism was of a very odd, peculiar, and quaint kind—such as a faun or a poet might have indulged. The richly-coloured and old-fashioned grotesque (like the charming head-pieces to the papers in this volume) was his favourite style in conversation as in art. Coleridge has described the sort of mood in which he wrote a wild invective against Pitt. Lancelot's talk about his dinner, though often eloquent enough, was as "By thy fair immortal hand, purely fantastical. a bowl of strong drink, Ganymede, such as the gods do drink! Let it stand on the window-sill, and the night-breeze will cool it. What drink divine, dost thou ask, boy, do our thirsty souls demand? Thou knowest how Sir Thomas Browne has said that to drink of the ashes of dead relations is 'a passionate prodigality;' but is not a bottle of Johannisberg an even costlier luxury? The hundred-yeared Opimian, 'warm with the sunshine of Anacreon's soul,' rich with rosy memories of victory, fragrant with the triumphs of conscript fathers, who have returned one by one to the dust since it was first interred in its cellar, is quaffed by Emperors and proconsuls only. The laureate, like the Church of England, inclines to 'the pint of port,'—

Whose father-grape grew fat On Lusitanian summers.

Keat's taste is rarer no doubt-

O for a beaker full of the warm south, Full of the true, the blushful Hippocrene, With beaded bubbles winking at the brim, And purple stained mouth!

No! these are not for us, nor is that Cyprian, whereof Mrs. Browning has sung that it is soft, and tawny, and bright—

And the brown bees of Hymettus, Make their honey not so sweet—

seeing that we love a pale and dry sherry. So Ganymede, for the Englishman who defies the Pope and all his ministers, a flagon of Bass or Alsopp, an' it please you. Let the modern poet mimic Horace and Catullus, and drink the 'bitter old Falernian' if he choose,*—we will not

* Yet some of these lyrics have caught a not unmusical echo of the antique, witness A Song of other Days—by that true poet, and delightful humourist, Oliver Wendell Holmes—

The Grecian's mound, the Roman's urn
Are silent when we call,
Yet still the purple grapes return
To cluster on the wall.
It was a bright immortal's head
They circled with the vine,
And o'er their best and bravest dead
They poured the dark-red wine.

Methinks o'er every sparkling glass
Young Eros waves his wings,
And echoes o'er its dimples pass
From dead Anacreon's strings:
And tossing round its beaded brim
Their locks of floating gold,
With bacchant dance and choral hymn
Return the nymphs of old.

be slaves. That creamy foam,—'is it not whiter than Dian's lap, softer than Helen's heart, smoother than the check of Cytherea?'"

Lancelot was a bit of a philosopher besides, and used to moralize over his pipe and his beer with the gravity of a Burleigh. "This civilization of ours," the words would come forth oracularly, through a cloud of Latakia, "is not only a very noisy, but undoubtedly a somewhat intricate, busi-These are certain of the considerations ness. which prominently suggest themselves to an honest and earnest man in these days—How am I to adjust my life to the activities and conditions of our society? what relation am I to bear to this nineteenth century, and its complicated civilization? There are social problems and dilemmas gathering upon us that will not be averted or mocked. How are they to be met? conquered or converted? solved happily by arithmetic, or only in the tears and blood of a revolution? And to these and others of a similar kind he finds himself unable to return any satisfactory reply. He can discover amid the confusion no distinct principle or system by which to shape his course—little or nothing that can command his clear and unhesitating assent. He cannot follow out this merciless civilization through its infinite ramifications—he is powerless to estimate

But the colour of this antique sentiment appears dim and ineffective when contrasted with the bright and solid reality of such lines as these—

And yet among my native shades, beside my nursing mother, Where every stranger seems a friend, and every friend a brother; I feel the old convivial glow, unaided, o'er me stealing, The warm, champagny, old-particular brandy-punchy feeling.

its forces, or to detect its results—he stands abashed and bewildered before it! Should he then appeal to those who are considered as men having authority, are his difficulties in any way resolved? certainly not. He appeals to the philosopher; the philosopher is on the point of proving that there is an external world; no, not quite that indeed; but, at least, that it cannot be proved that there is not; and consequently he has no leisure to devote to a merely practical and utilitarian inquiry. He turns to the politician, and in the leaders of the State especially, he is forced to remark the absence of philosophical acumen, or comprehensive sympathy. He perceives that they grasp no fact in its integrity; that, detecting no meaning in the present, they cannot gather its lessons, or minister to its necessities; that, formal and pedantic, they put their trust in the chapter of accidents and delays, and design to save the souls of men by a tax, or a police bilL But, after all, he cannot find in his heart to criticise them severely; our wants, our necessities, our dilemmas, have at length become so complicated, that, by this time, he fancies, they have escaped our guidance, and eluded our control. The Churches, at least, should be prepared to furnish him with an answer—unfortunately for our friend the Churches are vigorously engaged in consigning each other to the enemy on account of certain intricate niceties of ecclesiastical etiquette—and require him in the meantime to hold his peace. And if his aspirations and prospects have been so directed that he is obliged to examine the position of the Church

itself, he is forced to own that it is hardly honest —hardly straightforward—equivocal at the best. He cannot disguise from himself that there are certain orthodox anachronisms—certain anomalies of mediæval ecclesiasticism—associated with its doctrine and its discipline, which are utterly repugnant to his intellect, and which he cannot take upon him in any wise to accept or to assert. Possibly some good-natured divine essays to remove his difficulties, and he is confidentially informed that the anomaly, which he has perceived, has been frequently recognised; that the Church has virtually abandoned the position to which she was originally confined; that the obnoxious text is only permitted to remain, as it is unsafe to meddle with the refinements of ecclesiastical organisation; and that when a man formally avows his entire, thorough, and unreserved allegiance to all the doctrines in any document he is required to sign, he, in all probability, may thereby really mean to testify that they do not, in any particular, command his assent. In short, in prosecuting his researches, he is gradually convinced that society in this country, whether on its secular or ecclesiastical side, has become nothing better than a system of understood and organised artifice; that none of our institutions bear to be examined; that none of our creeds bear to be defended; and that it is impossible to find any principle upon which an honest man may take up his stand, and look the world honestly in the face. And the consequence of this conviction is, that, after a period of positive disgust with Church, and State, and the rest of our

cherished institutions, he settles down into a condition of comparative apathy and inaction; acquires a tone of sarcastic toleration, or of sceptical acquiescence; is inclined to deny all things if he is asked to believe anything, and is content to deny nothing if he is let alone; possibly takes an Italian villa, or a seraglio at Scutari, and, throwing up our statistical civilization, betakes himself to those sobered societies, which, after a brief period of stormy and difficult renown like our own, thought meet to retire from the contest, and have now, at least, found—repose."

Well—Lancelot has tried the Italian villa. I cannot exactly undertake to explain "the reason why." Lesbia had ceased to smile upon him, perhaps; the tiny, tender, violet kid "deliciæ meæ puellæ," had been consigned to the flames; yet, I think Lancelot was heart-whole when he left. He took those little rebuffs, indeed, with great composure. The world was all before him where to choose; but eldest sons did not grow in Belgravia like blackberries. It was the lady's loss, not his.

Quem nunc amabis? quoius esse diceris? Quem basiabis? quoi labella mordebis?

He professes, indeed, that it was our "civilisation" that did it. It bored him to death. And so,—he went to Brundusium. "I am safe among the tombs," was his aspiration. But he has been disappointed. "Will you believe it?" he exclaims indignantly, "I have been deceived. I found a people who were dead and buried, and I said to myself,—'You may stay here unmolested.' But no

sooner is the villa at Pompeii furnished than they wake up and raise the very devil of a row. 'Civil and religious liberty!'—the exact words that have exasperated me all my life. A deputation came to me the other day. 'You are an Englishman,' they observed, 'we would partake of your civilization.' 'My good people,' I replied with a coolness that surprised myself, 'if you knew as much about our civilization as I do, you would think twice over it.' I kept my temper; but of course they have driven me away. Sedley has engaged a Coptic monastery for me on the Upper If civilization follow me across the Levant, Nile. there are steppes beyond the Balkan, and the Fan and the Gorilla still hold their own behind the Mountains of the Moon."

There is, of course, a little exaggeration in all this. "Give me to drink mandragora," is an effectively dramatic request from the mouth of Cleopatra; but I suspect that, in his heart, Lancelot still prefers the bitter beer that is manufactured by Mr. Bass. A raw oyster is palatable; but a beef-steak au naturel would send him back pretty quickly to his club. He took an elaborately furnished dressing-case away with him; and he was hopelessly helpless for a week when his travelling tub went astray. I send him a box of new books once a-month; and I believe he would die of ennui did the Peninsular and Oriental Company fail to deliver it to the day.

An epistle with a foreign post-mark is generally rather welcome. It is like a communication from the next world—the writer's point of view is

commonly so different from your own. It brings with it, too, in a very fresh way, reminiscences of what was probably the pleasantest period in your own life—when you wore a straw-hat and a shabby shooting-coat, and, with your hands in your pockets, sauntered along the Cascine, or eat your ices at Florian's. And, besides, it is interesting to learn what is thought of you, and your doings, and your books, by those who live beyond the influences which insensibly affect ourselves, and to whom,

unfamiliar Arno, and the dome Of Bruneleschi,

are more familiar than the Thames and the Monument. So, for all these reasons, I will even leave Lancelot to speak for himself on some of the books which the last box contained. He finds time hang rather heavy on his hands, I suspect; for the hasty scrawl has developed of late into half-adozen pages of closely-written foolscap.

I write now,—he begins,—to thank you specially for the last bundle of books, which, after some annoyance from the Neapolitan police, are fairly deposited in what, by a pleasant fiction, is called my study—a charming apartment, littered with novels, and busts of philosophers, and statues of the gods, and cooled by the sea-breeze from Capri, which at this moment sighs deliciously through the half-closed Venetian blind. You want to know what I think of them, how I like them, how your cold English imagination sorts with our fervent sunshine. Perpend, my good sir, and I will

tell you. But, ere doing so, let me entreat you to observe one precaution hereafter—no more of the "instructive" novel, "an thou lovest me, Hal."

I speak feelingly; but not without provocation. This was how it happened.

One spring morning, a year ago, going down for a week to a remote and secluded glen among your misty hills, where I knew that not a soul spoke English except the landlord, I took the precaution to slip a new novel into my portman-It lay snugly enough between a charter of Novodamus, and a Scottish Act of Parliament, which was passed eighteen months since, which has already been twice "amended," and whose inconceivable provisions confound even its maker. Well; I arrived on the Friday evening, and by ten o'clock it had begun to rain—not the rain of the temperate zone, but a down-pour, a pelt, a water-spout. "In the dead unhappy midnight, when the rain is on the roof," I was wakened, to find that it had not confined itself to the roof, but —as a monotonous splash on the straw-stuffed pillow indicated—was penetrating into the apartment. As soon as the morning broke, it became evident that I was doomed to undergo a wet Saturday. Squally showers of sleet drifted in gusts across the lake; the mist lay low down upon the mountains, nearly blotting them out of sight, and giving to the jagged peaks, which occasionally peered through, an intensely repulsive and forbidding aspect. Until breakfast was fairly discussed, and until the dreary desert which separated me from dinner stared me blankly in the

face, I continued to indulge in delusive hopes that the weather might "clear,"—reveries which were skilfully and assiduously fomented by "mine host." But hope deferred makes the heart sick; and when, about eleven o'clock, an itinerant "cadger," looking more like a drowned rat than any other object in nature, entered the inn kitchen, to consume a thimbleful of usquebaugh, and then cheerfully departed, having informed us in the interval that "it was just a bit scuff yet," but that the afternoon would be "weet," I at last finally abandoned the vision of the "cast" across the Salmon-Pot below the Linn, which had haunted me for a "Let it rain," I said, in a comparatively month. resigned spirit; "I have here what will pass the day;"—and thereupon drawing the moth-eaten easy-chair before the fire, I removed Millicent Fitzboodle,—that was the creature's name,—from the legal society where she had spent the night. You may imagine the despair that fell upon me when I discovered that the very first chapter contained an elaborate discussion of a new and improved scheme of Parliamentary Reform, which, with an excursion into the Thirty-nine Articles, and a little abuse of the Creed and the Decalogue, was continued in the second. Beyond the introductory page of that second chapter, I have no acquaintance with the contents.

One present romance style, indeed, is at once objectionable and characteristic. There is in it, as in our poetry, an intense and obtrusive self-consciousness. The poet and the novelist dissect the fibres of the heart, as the surgeon dissects the

fibres of the brain. This internal analysis is a The old masters knew well sign of weakness. how to touch the heartstrings; they had a keen and vivid sympathy with the external world, and the "great actions," as Milton calls them, which evoke great passions, which move us with ruth, and pity, and terror, were employed by them with consummate skill. The mental drama which they depict is the reflection of the great drama without. The black shadow which lies upon the soul, is the shadow of the spectre which stalks outside,—of the catastrophe which impends, of the retribution which menaces. The mental effect is not disproportionate to its visible cause; nor is it dwelt upon with a diseased and irritating familiarity. The mind is not incessantly watched; its most flimsy experiences are not officially scheduled; its most puerile operations are not indecently exposed. But this healthy habit of our ancestors their frank, straight-forward, unconscious way of doing their work—has been given up; and every author now looks after his mind, as if he were a member of the detective police. We have, somehow, lost our firm hold of the world, and with it the vivid "side-lights" of passion and pathos, which the sharp contact struck out. The result is, that our poets and dramatists either employ machinery," as the old-fashioned critics well called it, which is essentially fantastic and unnatural, or they banish it entirely—an element as alien to their sympathies as the world of action "He consisted," Heine says of a to the recluse. certain German professor, "he consisted of nothing but soul and plasters." Our romance consists of nothing but sentiment and dry bones. It wants the flesh and blood of a good "plot." There is either no plot whatever, or an essentially bad plot.

The temerity with which a man sits down to compose a novel has often been matter of surprise to us. You do not think of rivalling the Apollo, or the Psyche, or the Venus of the Tribune, unless you have been bred a sculptor. Only the painter, skilled in his art, strives to emulate the Transfigured God and the Mater Unigeniti of Raphael. But any man, woman, or child, it would seem, can write a novel. The composition of a romance is an easy achievement, for which the merest tyro is qualified. But the truth is, that a really artistic novel infers a combination of faculties with which the majority of scribblers are not gifted. The seeing eye and the understanding heart are rare endowments, and except the novelist have these, curiously refined and finely tempered, his work can never present more than a mocking counterfeit of life. And the plot—which is the very back-bone of the novel—is not by any means so accessible an article as some would seem to suppose.

For what does the ability to construct a good plot infer? A plot should grow as a tree or a flower grows; and unless the writer can divine the organic relation between events, can perceive that there is a coherent and vital order in human affairs, can master, as if by instinct, that law of life which makes one course of action draw with it, as its inevitable corollary or supplement, a

given series of effects, which makes the crime peremptorily and inevitably exact the penalty which the divine judgment has attached to it-" when lust hath conceived it bringeth forth sin, and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death,"—his plot will always manifest a certain crudeness and inconsequence. There will be a screw loose somewhere, which will mar the sense of a consistent and vital growth. So difficult is this work, so rare is this instinct, that perhaps a few only of the very greatest men have perfectly succeeded. The Greeks succeeded, because they worked upon a plain and simple pattern. The Attic dramatist drew with an iron pen—hard and unbending as the Destiny that ruled overhead—his stern plan of guilt and retribution, and then stuck to it like grim death. He did not, indeed, track the affections through their subtler processes, nor the imagination into its more intricate pathways; but his roughly-hewn representation of human life was not only grand and simple, but artistically logical Shakspeare succeeded, too, though and coherent. after a very different fashion. His careless and indolent ease deceived a generation of critics. Those who had been taught to find "unity" in the rigid classical forms, were perplexed and embarrassed by his profuse and negligent opulence. Our eyes have been opened. We know that the action of his drama is guided by the rarest and truest instinct ever bestowed perhaps on mortal man, and that the organic consistency of life, if not the mechanical precision of form, is everywhere preserved with profound and subtle skill.

But, apart from the marvels of art, even the most rudimentary plot is difficult to manage. Charles Lamb, in one of his delightful letters, describes his own difficulties. "I am busy," he says, writing to Mr. Shelley, "with a farce in two acts, the incidents tragi-comic. I can do the dialogue, commey for; but the plot-I believe I must omit it altogether. The scenes come after one another like geese, not marshalling like cranes, or a Hyde Park review. I want some Howard Payne to sketch a skeleton of artfully succeeding scenes through a whole play; as the courses are arranged in a cookery-book-I to find wit, passion, sentiments, character, and the like trifles. To lay in the dead colours; I'd Titianesque 'em up. To mark the channel on a cheek (smooth or furrowed, yours or mine); and, where tears should course, I'd draw the waters down. To say where a joke should come in, or a pun be left out. To bring my personæ on and off like a Beau Nash; and I'd Frankenstein them there. To bring three together on the stage at once: they are so shy with me, that I can get no more than two, and there they stand, till it is the time, without being the season, to withdraw them."

Most neophytes—not a few skilled workmen—can tell a like tale. Either the plot will not suit the characters, or the characters dispense with the plot.

We do remember love ourselves, In our sweet youth,

and in the days of my innocence I once began a romance. It proceeded energetically through half

a-dozen chapters, in which, as Lamb found, the tête-a-tête conversations were the most numerous and successful. At that critical period, however, unpropitious fate interfered, and the book was laid aside. On my return, I found that all the surviving dramatis personæ (for one or two had been made away with in the first chapter) were landed in a most striking scrape—thoroughly artistic, but unfathomable as an Irish bog. For my life I could not recall how they were to be got out; and there, I regret to say, they remain to this day.

But if you will send me novels, let them be fresh, racy, and brilliant, like this of Silas Marner, which I finished, under the olive terrace, this morning.

Women, it would appear, are bearing away the Victoria Cross of Romance. Upon the whole, indeed, they are better adapted than men for this kind of work. The masculine mind is grave and didactic, not to say ponderous, and cannot unbend It never goes out for an airing, exso naturally. cept on stilts. Women, on the other hand, have the knack of writing, as they speak, without constraint, Their very weakness is in and in their own voice. their favour. They write the most charming nonsense, and are not afraid. A really clever woman makes "a gossip" that no "male thing," in Lilias' contemptuous phrase, can approach; and for the same reason her novels are commonly the most true, animated, and minutely characteristic. hold upon life is closer; her interest in its simpler forms more intense and immediate; slight and passing shades of feeling are more visible to her delicate watchfulness; she can speak with openness of trivial passions which men seldom observe, and which, when they do, they cannot record without an effort or a blush. If it be the province of romance, as of comedy,

> To shew an image of the times, And sport with human follies, not with crimes;

to paint the fashion of the hour, without trying to impart to the representation any graver, or more tragic and satiric interest, then this is a province that is peculiarly her own.

Our male novelists in fact are being gradually driven out of the field. They used to console themselves with the assurance that, though the works of their lady-rivals were at once more readable and more lively, they yet wanted—power. Charlotte Brontë's novels, in which the flood-tide of passion sweeps through the dreariest abysses of the soul, and stirs them stormily, repelled that plea, and the indictment has latterly taken another shape. Women, it is said, can write powerfully, but they cannot write moderately. always in hysterics or heroics. Their pages bristle, like a porcupine's back, with points of admiration or contempt,—are sown with the most emphatic italics and the largest capitals. want fairness, temperance, impartiality. Their prejudices are inveterate: they either worship the curate, or, behold—he is an angel of darkness. Men, we know, never hate causelessly, nor reason illogically, nor love foolishly, nor judge intemperately. These charming caprices are exclusively feminine. Our wives and sisters cannot ascend "the quiet seats above the thunder" in which their lords habitually recline. A very pretty theory as it stood; only, unhappily for its currency, a past summer has witnessed the debût of Adam Bede; and no one can venture to deny that the hand which depicted, with an even love and an equal sympathy, the old-fashioned Rector, and the fervid Methodist girl, must have been guided by a singularly fair, temperate, and candid intellect.

The blank caused by the death of Charlotte Brontë has been speedily filled. The vacant Throne has already found an occupant. The authoress of Adam Bede is no unworthy successor to the authoress of Fane Eyre. If her power is less intense, it is more composed, and she bears the sceptre with graver mien and more tranquil authority.

The traits of her remarkable genius are marked and easily characterised. Her style is admirable—pure, limpid, translucent, and touched with the poetic grace which communicates that last finish to language, which centuries of high-breeding, and refined culture, communicate to the beauty of form or feature. Her humour is exceedingly felicitous, and belongs to the very highest class. Mr. Dickens and his followers produce a grotesque effect by exaggerating a peculiarity of voice, or a trick of manner—the accidents which are often in no way characteristic of the real incongruities that lie below the surface. It is these that, with a curious truthfulness, this

lady has appropriated; and the humour that lights her pages is not the bastard wit, which, Mrs. Malaprop-like, seeks its materials in the dislocation of an image, or the misunderstanding of a phrase; but the humour of character, the humour which is the fruit of a deep and genial insight into the heart, and of a tolerant sympathy with the crooked and cross-grained forms into which human life, when acted upon by local influences, is so apt to run. Few things, moreover, are more rarely met with in books than that exquisite rendering of the child-life in which she excelsthe real healthy, hungry, little animals, who play at marbles, and devour jam-tarts, and who are yet tender, selfish, loving, impulsive, and arbitrary, as any full-grown man or woman; for only a very powerful imagination can recall with exactness the impressions which so quickly grow dim to most of us—the brightness and bitterness of our boyhood. Her imagination, lastly, is of the Shakspearean cast, which contemplates every aspect of life without aversion or uneasiness. She is supremely impartial. She is never stung into indignation. She does not feel the sharp pain which the feebler and more sensitive class of cultivated minds experience when forced into the presence of meanness or She looks on calmly the while, and vulgarity. records her impressions without any show of resentment or antipathy. The silver shield reflects with tranquil fidelity the boors who plough the fields, and the summer clouds which fleck the heaven.

But we should mistake her much if we failed

to notice the passionate element in her character. In this respect she reminds me of the Roundhead of the seventeenth century. Cromwell was possessed by a great passion, which quickened and exalted his faculties into a sort of madness; and yet Cromwell had a cool head and a grim humour. A fire He was austere; but he was fervid. burned beneath that plain garb, and that uncomely visage. Frost blisters, and every nerve of his iron frame, thrilled with sensitive life. But the author of Adam Bede unites with the old Puritanic fervour and austerity many of the elements of a richer, more poetic, and more luxurious organisa-The brilliant Aspasia of the boudoir sometimes becomes the devotee of the convent. is the result, not as is commonly supposed, of mere weariness and satiety; but because the dreams, the visions, and the ecstasies of the ascetic are only another aspect of that craving for excitement which finds relief in art and music, in the intrigue of the court, and the whirl of society. We see the union not unfrequently; it has recently blown among ourselves into those pretty and elegant asceticisms, which engage the attention of certain high church maidens, fresh from the Opera and the Park,—

She works religious petticoats; for flowers
She'll make church histories; her needle doth
So sanctify my cushionets, besides
My smock sleeves have such holy embroideries,
And are so learned, that I fear in time
All my apparel will be quoted by
Some pure instructor.

There, for instance, is Dinah. No one could have

drawn that character who did not in some degree acknowledge the sway of a like fervid and enthusiastic religious feeling. But the same hand has depicted the proud and wilful Maggie Tulliverthe girl who owns the influence, and surrenders herself to the fascination, of a sinister and almost sensual passion. In Maggie the will is represented as powerless to resist a tyrannical impression—a domineering whim. But in either case the motive power is very similar. The passion which drove the Roundhead to a throne through the blood of a king, drives the high-spirited girl to the man against whose love she strives as against a sin. At one time it runs into a Mahomet, a Jeanne d'Arc, or a Crusade; at another, into those charming and dangerous Circes, who, for a century or two, virtually governed the sumptuous but rotten monarchy of Versailles. Such a temperament, as I have said, is a phenomenon not unknown to psychologists; and the authoress of Dinah and Maggie must have been able to realise very vividly the imperiousness of its dictates.

The character of this Maggie Tulliver,—the heroine of the queer, comfortable old-fashioned, dusty Mill on the Floss,—involves some rather interesting considerations, touching what may be called "the minor moralities." In fact, in any light, hers is a character to my mind replete with interest.

The wilful little maiden, in her early girlhood, is one of the most charming figures ever drawn in a romance. The petulant poetic child, with her flashing black eyes, and her dark unkempt locks, which she tosses about with the air of a small

Shetland pony, wreaking stormy vengeance upon her doll, or caressing it in tender remorse, vain of her cleverness, defying the powers that be, and yet eager for love, flashes through that prosaic life like a sunbeam—like a verse of Homer in the Pan-Governed by her feelings, she is continually in mischief, her fitful and vivid imagination is always leading her astray; and then she is judged as though her wrong-doing were the fruit of deliberately wicked intention, and not (as it is) of a peculiarly fine and highly strung nature. feels keenly, but blindly, the coarse injustice of the verdict; she protests against it in bitterness of soul, or appeals mutely to the gods (for Maggie is a little heathen at heart); but the passionate pain in the child's breast remains mostly inarticulate. The temptations which try this little Maggie when she arrives at womanhood—her moral and spiritual education, so to speak—give to The Mill on the Floss its dramatic interest and consistency. We are not asked to pronounce a verdict on any vulgar temptation, on any absolute crime. lofty and imperious woman is in no danger of falling as the vain and simple Hetty did. The guilt is so subtle, that it is difficult to determine whether it be guilt or not; the temptations to yield are so complex, that it becomes a controversy whether to The weaknesses are those to resist be better. which a nature like Maggie's is peculiarly liable none the less dangerous, because masked and intri-The conflict between desire and duty,—the desire being in itself perfectly legitimate, and the duty repugnant and oppressive,—is the conflict which Maggie has to encounter. She does not win, and she is not altogether defeated. The proud beauty is humbled and brought low; but even in her bitterest abandonment she asserts a nobleness of nature which raises her above those who condemn her. It is a story of martyrdom—none the less touching because the martyr is not always strong, because the sensitive nerves shrink from the torture, because the feeble knees sometimes refuse to sustain the eager and soaring spirit.

Maggie, the woman, is the development of the " Magsie"—as dark-eyed and rebellious child. her brother used to call her in their moments of childish reconciliation—has grown into a lovely girl, tall, dark, crowned with a circling coronet of jet-black hair; for the wild mane, which she had shaken so defiantly at the world, has been subdued, and is now the crowning charm of her rich and expressive beauty; and owning the eyes which captivate and madden mankind—"such eyes defying and deprecating, contradicting and clinging, imperious and beseeching—full of delicious opposites." And the spirit is still the child'sthere is the same deep necessity for loving, the same impetuous unrest, the same ungovernable sensibility. But as her nature expands, the hard and crushing narrowness of her lot becomes more difficult to endure. She yearns for the finer and ampler life beyond its borders. But her duty, as she reads it, requires her to renounce the world with which her own loftiest, and most poetic, instincts claim fellowship. On more than one occasion these motives come into sharp collision,—sometimes she yields, sometimes she triumphs. This is the storm which wages in Maggie's heart all her life, and which, through its various issues, is traced with supreme truthfulness.

Twice Maggie is bitterly tempted,—by her pity (for at bottom it is truly never more than pity) for Philip, and by her love for Stephen. Philip is the son of the man who has ruined her father. She knows that the parents of both would forbid the banns; yet, after a severe struggle, she consents to meet him, and confesses that she loves him. She yields to her intense longing for a larger life. Her father's querulous sense of failure, the mild irrationality of her mother, the meanness of the desolated home, were withering her mind, and crushing her heart; and the proud and lofty spirit could not endure the bonds which the disciple of Thomas à Kempis, in the ardour of renunciation, had tried to bind around her lithe limbs. represents to her imagination that liberated life for which she yearns, and in which alone she can breathe freely. His conversation, his love, his quaint reveries, his animated pencil, open up to her a new world, warm with light, and vivid with colour, —and she cannot resist the temptation to enter. So she admits a ground of concealment into her life that hurts its simplicity and clearness. rule of sacrifice ceases to be the rule of her conduct. She surrenders herself henceforth, as she feels with fruitless pain, to "the seductive guidance of illimitable wants."

The same contest is renewed, in even more tragic fashion, when Maggie, in the pride of her

mature beauty, fascinates Stephen Guest. Her hand is promised to Philip; Stephen is virtually engaged to Maggie's cousin, Lucy,—a pretty, gentle, affectionate little soul. But the bitter god of love comes between the affianced lovers, and separates them. Maggie cannot help loving Stephen. There is a richer, more complex music in his nature than in Philip's, a poetic sensibility which attunes with her own, an intense enjoyment of the beautiful in life, to which her heart responds. The miserable fascination cannot be resisted by either of them; and, in the fierce inward conflict which it arouses, —for Maggie unites with a certain passionate abandonment the spiritual force of a woman who has held silent and protracted communings with pain,—the great power of the writer is manifested. The interview at the ball, when the girl casts back with the ire and bitterness of shame the involuntary homage she has extorted, is rendered by its dramatic vigour, and minute truthfulness, singularly impressive.

But Maggie, subdued by this appealing love, cannot be always strong: she loves Stephen, and she is forced to beg for pity, for mercy; to beseech him, because she loves him, to aid and not to weaken her resolution.

"He was looking eagerly at her face for the least sign of compliance; his large, firm, gentle grasp was on her hand. She was silent for a few moments, with her eyes fixed on the ground; then she drew a deep breath, and said, looking up at him with solemn sadness,

"'O it is difficult—life is very difficult. It

seems right to me sometimes that we should follow our strongest feeling;—but then, such feelings continually come across the ties that all our former life has made for us—the ties that have made others dependent on us-and would cut them in two. If life were quite easy and simple, as it might have been in paradise, and we could always see that one being first towards whom . . . I mean, if life did not make duties for us before love comes —love would be a sign that two people ought to belong to each other. But I see—I feel it is not so now: there are things we must renounce in life: some of us must resign love. Many things are difficult and dark to me; but I see one thing quite clearly—that I must not, cannot seek my own happiness by sacrificing others. Love is natural; but surely pity and faithfulness and memory are natural too. And they would live in me still, and punish me if I did not obey them. I should be haunted by the suffering I had caused. Our love would be poisoned. Don't urge me; help mehelp me, because I love you."

How, without any volition of their own, the river bears the lovers to the sea, and forces upon them the wrong against which they have striven; how, for one brief hour, Maggie's resolution fails; how she yields to what seems the inevitable and irresistible; and how again she gathers up all the spiritual force of her nature, and shakes herself free from the drowsy and bewitching spell which had benumbed her faculties,—reaching, ere the end comes, the highest levels of self-sacrifice;—is told, as you know, in language of surpassing beauty.

But I quarrel with the ending,—not, indeed, because it is tragic, but because it is not the fit close to that keen, and subtle, and masterly analysis. A bit of melodrama at the finish is inappropriate and illogical. Nature, we may be sure, did not bring the tragedy to a close in that rough-and-ready She evoked a subtler issue—she tried a fashion. The writer more intricate process of reparation. says finely, that it is often difficult to judge when life must go henceforth in a different direction from the best (from the best, at least, which was possible once),—when the wrong-doing must be condoned. "The great problem of the shifting relation between passion and duty is clear to no man who is capable of apprehending it; the question whether the moment has come in which a man has fallen below the possibility of a renunciation that will carry any efficacy, and must accept the sway of a passion against which he has struggled as a trespass, is one for which we have no master-key that will suit all cases." True, such judgments are difficult; but, with deference, I incline to believe that a woman placed in Maggie's position, would have instinctively felt that the time had come when she must marry She had resisted. But the world, cir-Stephen. cumstances, her own weakness—call it by what name we like—had proved too strong for her. It was time to give in. Not that it can ever be right to give in to evil; but there was no absolute evil here—all the evil that could be done had been done. The two hearts, that were bound up in them, were already hurt and bleeding, well-nigh broken. Maggie was innocent, but her fair name was sullied.

She loved Stephen more than she loved any other man: he loved her deeply and truly. Why should she renounce him? Could the renunciation bear any fruit? That is the question; for when it is fruitless, renunciation degenerates into asceticism. The man who practises a true self-denial restrains his inclinations, because he knows that his restraint will work good to others; but the ascetic starves, without purpose, a part of his nature. It is no doubt very humbling to feel that the time has come, when by our own act (or, as in Maggie's case, because we have not resisted day and night with all our might), we are forced to take the path which we know is the lower or less noble one; but the discipline which teaches humility is not unpurifying. Stephen and Maggie should have been united,—were united, if I read their story aright. No very vivid happiness, perhaps, was in store for them. The vision of a still sorrowful face haunted them at times with its gentle reproach. A sense of defeat and failure, of the loss of that more excellent life which might have been theirs had they had courage for the sacrifice, abided with them. But such defeat is not so rare as we are taught. There are not many lives into which more of imperfection has not entered. We all carry the marks of these failures with us to our graves; and this consciousness of a fall from absolute goodness—this sense of loss, irretrievable, that can never be quite repaired in this world, is often supremely tragic—so tragic, that Tragedy herself, "sweeping by in sceptred pall," need not scruple to use it.

Such is Maggie. Is the representation of

such a conflict immoral? Is it right that man or woman should be represented as yielding to the passion which takes Maggie and Stephen captive? I do not know that the story is a correct one, but I am sure that it is a true one. And if it be so, why should we be afraid to transfer it to our canvas? It cannot hurt us; nay, perhaps the knowledge that our hearts do harbour these rebellious and tyrannical sensibilities, may render us less liable to a surprise. Many novels, no doubt, said to be of a religious and moral nature, are constructed upon the hypothesis that human beings (with the exception of the villain of the piece, who is, on the contrary, an unredeemed and impossible blackguard) are always governed by the very highest motives, and affected by the least earthly passions; and the only considerable objection that I see to this style of thing—which is quite out of the line of the lady who wrote Silas Marner—is, that it happens to be entirely untrue. I don't say that it would be expedient to limit our novelists to the analysis of the subtler shade of feeling, to the discovery of the terribly intricate labyrinths of the conscience; yet, we must all agree that if these out-of-the-way and anomalous bits of our nature are to be probed at all, the work should be done honestly, and, as in this book, by a hand which seldom falters, by a judgment supremely impartial, and by a genius vivid and intense.

For my own part, I am not prepared to give up Antony and Cleopatra. You do not agree with me I know, yet I am fully persuaded that Shakspeare never wrote a greater tragedy. They are

bad ones both, I suppose, yet surely infinitely more interesting than the cautious Cæsar, or Octavia—

With her modest eyes, And still conclusion!

Antony is to the last a brave and generous gentleman, "though gray do somewhat mingle with our younger brown," and although he is undoubtedly a little mad on one side of the brain. "Gentle adieus and greetings" are the hardest reproaches he can send to the faithless friend who has left him. What! hurt the heart of the woman he loves, though she has flung away his world!

Fall not a tear, I say; one of them rates All that is won and lost.

Nor is Cleopatra unworthy of this "passionate prodigality,"—

He shall have every day a several greeting, Or I'll unpeople Egypt.

And after her lover leaves her, she rises to a height of passion which, as touched by Shakspeare, is a very marvel of art—lofty, brave, and unselfish, and yet so subtly sensuous in all the elements of which it is composed! She will not tarry to grace the triumph of the cold-blooded Roman. "I dream'd there was an Emperor Antony," she murmurs in that musical low voice, "fed on love's moody food," which had bewitched the souls of so many heroes, and she will go to him again, and hold him in her strong toil of grace, as of old.

I am again for Cydnus To meet Mark Antony!

So she joins her hero, "where souls do couch on flowers," as befits a princess, "descended of so many royal kings," in the robe and crown of Egypt,—

Give me my robe; put on my crown; I have Immortal longings in me.

An excessively pagan picture, doubtless; yet not without a charm, even to the Christian world.

One word, in parting, upon the gem of your budget—that lovely volume of Etchings, Child's Play, by E. V. B. You cannot conceive how refreshing the presence of these real English children is to a man with a certain liking for children, in a land where they are either infant phenomena concealed in French millinery, or little black-eyed, black-bodied beggars, with no concealment whatever. Don't you think, my friend, that the purifying influence of childhood is not half enough considered in our model moral metaphysics? For my own part, I do not believe that we have ever rightly understood how necessary to the salvation of this life of ours—with its pitiful meanness, weakness, selfishness—are the careless spontaneous teachings of those "of whom is the kingdom of heaven"—the wise instincts, the boundless courage, the beautiful unconsciousness, the largehearted charity of the child. But here, at least, is an artist who does, and I own that, with the exception of Murillo's rosy cherubs (growing and gathering out of the golden mist), I have never before met with such quaint, poetic, delicious glimpses into the mysteries of the child life-with

such a delicate but profound appreciation of the arch sweetness of girlhood, of the vagrant royalty of the boy. True children they are as ever gathered the violet, or plaited the daisy; but at the same time spiritual and suggestive as the child of Wordsworth's noble ode—and perhaps their peculiar felicitousness consists in the unobtrusive way in which the latent meaning is conveyed, so that you need not concern yourself about it unless you choose. True children they are; and though with the wonderful insight of the children of the poets, yet not by any means the children of modern scientific nurseries, where Jack has never mounted his memorable bean-stalk, and Cinderella never dropt before the enamoured prince her marvellous slipper, and Beauty never encountered the great, ugly, love-lorn Beast in the shady solitudes around that mysterious palace. On the contrary, the artist, knowing, as she tells us from Schiller, "that deep meaning lieth oft in childish play," has attached each of her illustrations to a verse from some childish song; and her most happy and suggestive sketches are often evolved out of the very simplest and most unpretending of these nursery rhymes. So that her book embraces almost all the most salient incidents in our early poetical culture. Willie Winkie, gorgeously arrayed in his night gown—a most graceful little urchin—taps at the doors and windows to assure himself that the babies are in bed; the vagrant Peep-Peep, whose unhappy predilection for roaming none of us have forgotten, wades demurely among the water lilies; and little Boy Blue, with the breezy evening

stirring among his curls, blows his shrill horn across the meadow land, over which the rooks are cawing noisily, and on which the autumn sun is setting. The old delightful fable of picking up gold and silver on Tom Tiddler's enchanted ground, suggests a charming picture—a group of thoughtful, large-eyed girls chasing butterflies and plucking buttercups—with such a glimpse through brake and woodland into the blue distant valleys! Others with the swallow, pipe in the May, and follow the cuckoo among the fruity branches of the cherry. Towards the close the sketches acquire a more thoughtful and imaginative tone. There is the palace on the waterside, and the glory of the sunset on the main, and the fair pale lady with her travelling robe floating upon the water, as though, like Undine, she had come direct from its heart—and many more beside. But perhaps the crowning mercy of the book is the last sketch but one—a young girl who leans her head upon her hand, as the old dog beside her leans his upon her lap, and looks out so pensively, inquiringly, yearningly, into the moonlight, that it does not need these somewhat quaint lines to tell us the mood of her maiden meditation:—

> Oh, that I were where I would be, Then should I be where I am not. But where I am, there I must be; And where I would be, I cannot.

In nearly every sketch the mere *drawing* is very perfect—nothing, for instance, can be more artistic than the rich, lavish, trailing folds of the drapery; and there is continually manifest a subtle, exquisite

sense of natural beauty—of the autumn fields—the moonlight water—the forest glade—the water lilies upon the slumbering stream!

You tell me that Child's Play is not this lady's only publication; but you do not send me the others. This one, however, is really so great a treat in itself—revealing, as it does, such a clear, frank, joyous insight, such a thoroughly English and womanly experience—that I cannot feel very deeply aggrieved by your neglect. Still you must find them a nook in the Christmas box, which I shall be looking for towards the close of the year. Finally, much pondering among my vines and olives, I cannot help fancying, my dear Juniper, how deliciously "E. V. B." could illustrate certain of the Laureate's lyrics. Here is The Day Dream, for instance, a ballad, like her own book, moulded by the true artistic sense out of a nursery story. Or what say you to the Morte d'Arthur? What a delight to trace in those grave, nervous, unaffected lines, so instinct with rough, rapid, poetic power, a series of pictures from the Homeric descriptions in that unrivalled fragment—the place of tombs the cold, eerie twilight—the mere with its knotted water-flags—the black-stoled weeping queens the dying king of knighthood—and then, away on the mystic main, the "Island Valley of Avilion"—

Where falls not hail, or rain, or any snow,
Nor ever wind blows loudly—but it lies
Deep meadow'd, happy, fair, with orchard lawns,
And bowery hollows crowned with summer sea,
Where I will cure me of my grievous wound.

There is a repose, lavishness, and poetic languor,

in her lines, which would sort well with the composure, refinement, and classic deliberateness of Tennyson's verse.

And now, as the moon grows dim behind the troubled mountain, Good Night, or rather, Good Morrow—atque in perpetuum, frater, ave atque vale. There is no post-office beyond the cataracts.





TERRA SANTA;

A PEEP INTO ITALY.

I felt the wind soft from the land of souls;
The old miraculous mountains heaved in sight,
One straining past another along the shore,
The way of grand dull Odyssean ghosts
Athirst to drink the cool blue wine of seas
And stare on voyagers.

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING.

Will it ever cease raining, I wonder? "There is surely a piece of divinity in us," says Sir Thomas Browne, "something that was before the elements, and owes no homage unto the sun"—which is well, seeing that the sun has permanently absented himself, "and all the air is emptied of his hoary majesty." Day after day this bad world appears to grow worse; and the present afternoon is unutterably wretched. The drifting clouds, like wandering birds, looking, with outstretched necks, for their nests, beyond the horizon, are rent into shreds, and driven away by the blast. The north wind howls among the turrets, and, sweeping along the wintry shore, blackens the sea and the floating sea-

weed. At intervals a few drops of rain beat sharply against the closed window, forced from some cloud more weary and heavy-laden than its brethren. The long rank grass, which the sheep, from some foolish aristocratic prejudice, refuse to taste, has been battered down by the storm; and the glazed and soaked appearance it presents, as it lies patiently along the marshy plain, is grievously damp and disconsolate. While beyond the forlorn masses of shrubbery on the lawn, where the survivors of a covey of partridges try to keep their blood warm, only one or two flooded fields are visible through the mist,—

red ploughed lands, O'er which a crow flies heavy in the rain.

There is no hope outside; but Lancelot's letter has brought with it pleasant recollections of a happier and sunnier dispensation. So, we will, if you please, draw the curtains and shut out the winter afternoon, and try to put together into some sort of shape, a parcel of dusty and time-stained notes, taken long ago in the Blessed Land. Among the cities of glory, "that gem, blue Parthenope's bay," or across the rich Campagna,—the noblest ride in Europe,—one may contrive to forget for a season the unmannerly manners of our Northern January.

The first of these sketches was jotted down, I recollect, "in the crimson evening weather," among the olives of the Riviera, well-nigh ten years ago. Many of the hopes which an Italian devotee of that time cherished, have been since realised. The emancipation of the Northern and Southern king-

doms, then only a dream or a prayer—and a rather hopeless one—is already one of the common-places of politics. The Great Minister, indeed, is only now a name in history; but the name is one that the children of free men will not willingly let die. Other hopes are yet deferred; other prayers have not yet been answered. But if the signs of the times are to be credited, not many months will pass before we witness the epilogue of a story—the story of recovered freedom and vindicated right—which baseness and ambition have not been able quite to soil. The men of the Riviera will be needed next autumn for other work than to glean their vines.

This year the must shall foam Round the white feet of laughing girls Whose sires have marched to Rome.

It is one of the fairest days of the dying summer, and over the hill-side there is cast lightly a violet veil of transparent mist, not hiding it, but rendering every feature curiously distinct, which will deepen into a glowing purple as the twilight dies swiftly on the water. These are the Alps of Savoy that rise, like a motionless cloud, bright and burnished, into the distant sky. That is the Mediterranean which breaks quietly on the sand at our feet. Long strings of mules, gay with ribbons, and panniers, and jingling bells, pick their cautious way along the footpath which has been scraped out of the rock; and at intervals a drove of high-bred oxen pass on from their Provençal valleys.

The yearling babe lies fast asleep in the cosy wicker basket on whose handle are strung the beads and the Crucifix. The little flower-girl, demure and large-eyed, with her heavy necklace, and earrings of real gold, and old-fashioned in her mother's cloak and boddice of many colours, waits under the ruined portico. How pretty is the grave timidity of the little matron as she lets the flowers drop from her lap in her embarrassed forgetful-How the fresh young life—fresh as the leaves in her lap, or the wild geranium which springs greenly from a rent in the marble—contrasts with the antique decay of Etrurian civiliza-Look at that group beside the fountain. The orange head-dress of the young mother communicates a still riper glow to the warm southern complexion; a black-eyed child, its glossy raven hair in tangled curls, leans against the knee on which is spread the wonderful blue and crimson mat of the matrons of Perugia; along the rocky ledge overhead a flock of wild goats pass one by one; a venerable patriarch in the van, who ever and anon drops his white beard over the precipice, and listens complacently to the whispered hymn from the valley, where the husbandman, up to the ears in yellow corn, prunes his vines. And the forms and colours of the landscape,—the pale green of the sky, the warm haze on the hills, the thin and delicate Campanili, the villa by the water side in its cypress grove, the lake with its cool depths of shadow, the trailing tendrils of the vine, the water-pitcher below the Egerian fount, homely yet poetic, as though a reminiscence of some old

Etruscan pattern,—are like those in a picture by Poussin or Claude.

Such is the northern sea-board of the Mediterranean, along whose shores a hardy and cheerful race, marshalled by a soldier-king and a wary minister, await with patience the restoration of a stricken land. Here, amid a people who have been bred upon a precipice, who scramble along its face like goats or squirrels, whose dwellings cling like the nests of sea-birds to the cliffs, and whose public ways are sweeps of grassy steps, and ranges of winding terraces, here if anywhere, here, and not upon the fruitful meadow-lands of Florence, or Bologna, or Rome, the seed is scattered from which the Italian monarchy is to spring. There is unquestionably good stuff in these men. women may be scolds and the children beggars; but the hardiness and wiry activity, the pith of limb and the shrewdness of eye, belong to a race whose life is not on the wane, whose keen sense and resolute manliness have not been blunted by excess nor palsied by sloth.

And now for Rome!

The whole day you have been jolted along in the coupé of a painfully conscientious and laborious diligence. When the morning broke, after a feverish night-journey, disturbed by visions of desolate albergos on the roadside, and a frontier dogana, with its glare of lights and ruffianly officials, who rummaged your baggage and dislocated your portmanteau—you had entered the Roman States. One or two towns were passed through in the earlier part of the route, filthy, ruin-

ous, desolate, abandoned to ferocious dogs, and still more ferocious beggars; but now you have left even these behind you, and entered upon a dreary and wretched country; white, sun-baked hillocks of sand or clay, sometimes clothed with whins or furze, and straggling stunted trees, but with no object, save the snowy Apennines in the cool distance, to relieve the wretched monotony. There are some birds—sparrows and thrushes, and ravenous-looking hawks-and strings of dingy mules laden with charcoal for Rome, and multitudes of emaciated black pigs, who roam about at their own sweet wills, without a mortal soul to At length, sick, jaded, with a sense guide them. of approaching malaria, you perceive some low mounts, higher somewhat than those among which you have been passing; there are white houses clustered over them and below them; and apart from them, rising out of the plain, clear up into the golden evening, a single dome of exquisite symmetry, perfect as a dream! Bow down reverently, as befits the place—bow down, and greet with grave decorum the sad queen of Christendom!

You must become habituated to its life, before you can thoroughly relish Rome—there is no city less inviting for a flying visit. But to a man with a certain measure of classical and picturesque enthusiasm, hardly any life can be more enjoyable and varied than that which the priestly Capital presents. There is the Vatican, with its cool galleries, its open courts, its noise of fountains, and its terraces, with their glorious glimpses over the

prostrate city into the heart of the Sabine hills; certainly, for sculpture, the richest collection in the world; and around it numberless churches, eloquent with the genius and devotion of many pious centuries; and through the whole city, princely but austere mansions, the palaces of the Roman nobles, where the owners still permit you to look on works painted for their fathers by Titian, or Raphael, or Da Vinci. Or, if you would avoid the bustle of crowded galleries, there are endless ruins where the stormy life that once beat lustily within their roofless walls has been stilled, and where you may wander for a summer's day without being vexed or disturbed by the presence of a single living creature—not the least memorable of them to us, those pleasant baths of Caracalla on the sunny slopes of the Aventine, among whose imperial and laurelled ruins Shelley wrote his Queen Mab, and near which the "cor cordium" of the poet is laid. Then there is the afternoon saunter on the Pincian. still graced by the haughty beauty of the Roman matron, haughty, but like all Italian beauty, grave, pensive, and serious. And while Frascati, Tivoli, and Albano lie within easy distance, to the horseman there is the swift daily gallop over the flat Campagna, and to the sportsman wild boar in the forest of Cisterna, and fabulous woodcock Indeed, the among the brushwood on the Anio. man who is neither a hunter nor a shot stands a bad chance in Rome; for, after cold galleries, and tombs, and catacombs, a breath of the free air of the Campagna is very needful to impart a resolute force to the blood, and to remove to a salutary

distance the evil smells of the dead city, and the unhealthy superstitions of the living.

The most interesting ramble in Rome is from the Capitol for a couple of miles along the Appian, as far as Cæcilia Metella's tomb. Descending from the Capitol by a long flight of stairs, we stand at once upon the desolate Roman forum, now a yellow, dusty, unequally paved road, to which even the imagination can hardly assign the fitting associations, but so surrounded by ruined columns, and the fronts of temples to neglected gods, and triumphal arches to emperors who have yielded to the enemy, that it might almost seem as though the Romans had heaped all their history, and all the most memorable of their associations. into a space some fifty paces broad. Further on, in the hollow beneath the hill-slope on which lay the pleasant gardens of Mæcenas, stood, and stands, the Colosseum, a vast and massive pile, the most colossal fragment of a colossal civiliza-The foxgloves are bending gracefully over its ruined arches—the sparrows are bearing straws for their nests in its crannies—the sweet scent of the white spring-clover in the arena has no taint of blood. For the fierce old heroes have departed, and their bloody revel is over.

The goats may climb, and crop
The soft grass on Ida's top,
Now Pan is dead.

Then still, in the early morning, we follow the Appian beyond the gates—that great and famous road by which the Roman legions went out to civilize the world, after a fashion of their own.

There is no human creature visible, save a stray peasant riding on his ass to Rome; but the fresh and bell-like chime of the birds, the glancing form and stealthy grace of bright-red lizards, and the indistinct murmur of an infinite insect life, supply a more fitting accompaniment. The whole road is lined by remains of ancient ruins, and runs between ranges of crumbling walls, until we reach the crest of the lava-stream, on which the tomb of Cæcilia Metella stands. If you are an artist, here is the place for your pencil, and you will hardly be disturbed in this green seclusion. The herdsmen are fast asleep under the shade of the olivetrees, while their goats and sheep are browsing quietly across the scanty herbage. On one side of you lies Rome, on the other the green and desolate Campagna; and across it, like great arteries (running right on with inflexible precision), long ranges of ruined arches, the aqueducts of the ancient city, reach over the flat and dreary waste to their perennial springs among the Apennines. And beside you, massive and ponderous in its elaborate masonry, rises that stately monument.

> Let's do it after the high Roman fashion, And make Death proud to take us,

said poor Cleopatra, trying to make the best of a bad business. Thus there is no weak affectation nor sentimentalism in Cæcilia Metella's tomb. It is the speech of a plain and downright Roman, who had no notion of tinsel or trumpery, but defied death in his own massive way, and built his vale, vale, in æternum vale, into immortal

marble. And the enemy has been, perforce, required to respect this iron will, and has only strewed some sunny spring flowers, and twined some ivy leaves, over the grave of the Roman matron, thereby, with quiet persuasiveness, eliciting a more fitting and tender beauty.

The works of art which interest us in Rome are not so much those produced by the Roman, as by the Greek and the later Italian—the countrymen of Phidias and the contemporaries of Raphael. The collections of Greek remains at Rome, Florence, and Naples, and especially at Rome, are sufficient to convey to us a very graphic idea of the Greek intellect—a subject which must ever retain a peculiar interest to the student of history.

The Greek religion was the religion of the imagination, and each of its divinities embraced a poetic conception. Foremost among these was Aphrodite, the representative of the purely material life, and whose attributes were consequently selected in this connection, as those of a more subtle and spiritual were grouped around the rare and mysterious Psyche. Out of the flashing foam of the Ægean, the finest expression of its bright and sparkling life, the starry grace of childhood arrested, and united with the winning tenderness of the woman, the blushing Aphrodite comes smilingly forth to greet the hoary Earth. Of all the expressions of this idea which the Greek sculptors have left us, and which are still preserved to us in the Italian galleries, the Venus de Medici is perhaps the most famous. That the

figure is very beautiful it is impossible to deny, but as it is a beauty which grows upon the beholder, the first impression in most cases is one of disappointment. Much of its peculiar charm, moreover, is due to its small and delicate proportions. In its fairy-like grace and size it resembles the Undine of the German tale, but it is Undine when she has exchanged the mere lovely infantile instinct for the true woman-life, for the complete understanding of the nature that she has gained. Upon the whole, however, and to the ordinary student of art, the Venus of the Capitol is perhaps as popular as any—nor undeservedly so. ocean shell is woven into the gathered hair, which in wavy ripples is braided low down upon the brow—" as low as she could wish it," like Octavia's; the face is characterized by a mild, dreamy, refined intelligence, and the attitude, though perfectly feminine, is queenly and impressive. is not perhaps so perfect and elaborate in some of those details of execution to which the scientific anatomist attaches so much importance, but certainly as a charming representation of the rich and perfected beauty of a woman, it is more completely satisfactory than the other. The gathering of the drapery around the feet of the Venus known as the Venus of Praxiteles, is remarkably effective; and the sweet, grave, sightless beauty of this stained and mutilated copy, yet serves to account for the unrivalled fascination of the Cnidan Aphrodite. Contrasted with the Greek idea of Aphrodite, is that of Athene—wise, chaste, severe, The Minerva Medica is, I think, the inflexible.

most impressive statue in the Vatican; clear, and frank-eyed, the helmet marvellously fitted to the woman's brow, she meets you face to face, in the force of her fearless integrity, and awes you into silence by her grave and haughty serenity. Further on in the same gallery, three several compartments are appropriated to three very celebrated Greek groups, the Apollo, the Laocoon, and the Both the Apollo and the Antinous Antinous. have been, perhaps, overpraised, though certainly the Apollo, divinely triumphant and disdainful, "the arrow bright with an Immortal's vengeance," may not unfitly represent the royal god of light. The Antinous is valuable, I am told, from an anatomical point of view; but there is another Antinous, a bas-relief in the Villa Albano, which to those who look less to acquaintance with muscle, and more to grace and beauty of expression, must be much more so in every other.* The form of the head, the fall of the curls, the disposition of the lotus leaves, are all exceedingly graceful; but the expression of the face is marvellous. dreamy, and meditative, the thick lips curved into an expression of pensive disdain, Antinous, lotus crowned, looks at us from the untarnished marble, the image of refined and intellectual voluptuousness! And in connection with this Antinous it is

Look long enough On any peasant's face here, coarse and lined, You'll catch Antinous somewhere in that clay, As perfect-featured as he yearns at Rome From marble pale with beauty.

^{*} It is to this Antinous, I presume, that Mrs. Browning alludes in Aurora Leigh—

worthy of note that the lips in certain of these Greek statues retain much of the Egyptian type, especially in those which are meant to convey the sense of meditation. It is also curious to observe, that while most of the figures possess of course the frank, obvious beauty with which the Greeks invariably endowed a Venus or an Apollo, and which cannot be separated more especially from the quaint, sensual, grape-like life which they attribute to the Fauns and other graceful and poetic, but utterly material, elements of their creed, yet in not a few—as in the Genius of the Vatican, and the Antinous to which I allude—we can detect the intense and vague thoughtfulness, the implied and averted intelligence, the inevitable, incurable, mournfulness—all the qualities which characterised the mystical genius that moulded the sphinxes of Egypt and the eaglelions of Assyria, and whose presence here necessarily conveys the impression of a more thoughtful insight than we are accustomed to attribute to the clear, piercing, logically-poetic Greek.

But, after all, these are the exceptions; for it is especially in the delineation of the graceful caprices of a cheerful imagination—the Fauns, the Cupids, the Centaurs of their mythology—that the Greeks display an unrivalled ease, and a richness of fancy, which have never been surpassed. The Faun of Praxiteles, with the tiger's skin strung lightly across the shoulder, and the grape-leaves braided into the flowing hair, is probably the most graphic and poetic statue in the world.* Most of

^{*} Mr. Hawthorne has derived from this matchless statue the idea

the Cupids, too, are delightfully true to the boy-Here are two wrestling: the one has been lifted from his feet, and passionately and with angry tears is striving to loose the hands which are clasped round his body; there, wearied with play, the head lies softly upon the outstretched arm, while the hand still grasps the flower he had gathered before he slept. And in the rendering even of the brute life—as in this group, where a flock of goats gather round a shepherd who plays upon a reed; or in this of the grayhounds, where the one bites, playfully and daintily, the ear of the other—they exhibit not only a more accurate acquaintance with the habits and forms of animals than some critics are disposed to allow them, but, at the same time, the habitual influence of that creative and sportive fancy, which communicated an animated and joyous grace to every form of life.

There are some fine faces among the Romans, though after a different fashion from the Greek—more masculine and straightforward, less piercing and poetic. That of Cicero is refined, fastidious, critical, suggestive, moreover, of a certain sharp and penetrating insight. The front of the head is bald, the scattered locks are brushed carefully round the temples, and instead of the Roman orator we have a much more characteristic portrait of a high-bred, middle-aged English gentlemad—polite, argumentative, agricultural. The statue of Pompey in the Palazzo Spada—the'

or key-note of that charming romance—Transformation—a romance containing much admirable artistic criticism.

statue at whose feet "great Cæsar fell"—is impressive in its general effect—while one hand is outstretched in a royal imperious fashion, the other, Atlas-like, supports the globe—but the eyes distended, the mouth curved into a leer, the brow deeply furrowed and seared, are essentially repulsive, and do not correspond with the ideal of the indolent, but liberal-minded, Roman. The keen, kingly, conquering countenance of Marc Antony, the serene intelligence of Trajan, the bitter scowl of Caracalla, are all characteristic in their way; but the royal head which beyond all others is worthy of admiration, and which, even more than the most famous statues of an Antinous or an Apollo, satisfies the sense of the highest beauty, is the bust of the young Augustus. There is a very charming picture by Greuse in the Louvre—La Cruche Cassée—which has curiously enough many of the characteristics which make this bust so fascinating. It represents a peasant girl carrying a broken pitcher and a lapful of gathered flowers. The light hair retreats from the forehead, and is loosely braided back, and bound behind the temples by a fillet, in which some white roses have been carelessly fastened. A doubtful smile flits across the large thoughtful eyes, and sweetens the refined and critical intelligence of the mouth. indolent grace, the grave self-possession, and the dreamy innocence of the simple girlhood—innocent and simple as the flowers she has just gathered into her lap—nothing can be happier than the manner in which all these ideas are suggested and asserted by the painter; and I am inclined to think that the winning charm, alike of this flower-girl and of the boy-emperor, is to be found in the union which either artist designed to indicate—the union of a very infantile and, in the one case, feminine expression, with many of the qualities and features of a maturer and more conscious Thus we have in the young Augustus the same sedate and critical expression—the same grave, childlike composure—the face of a child indeed, but of a child brooding over, and suggestive of, the rich promise of the years that are in store. There is a deep curve beneath the mouth which gracefully dimples the chin; both the lips are remarkably expressive of sweetness and firmness; delicate and fastidious, yet perfectly masculine; the short boyish curls fall over the massive and knitted brow, and the head is slightly inclined to the side, in harmony with the general effect of poetic and pensive repose.

Descending from the Greek to the Italian, the two most famous art names that suggest themselves in Rome are those of Raphael and Michael Angelo. The finest sculptures of Michael Angelo, however, which I have anywhere seen, are those in the sacristy of San Lorenzo, and the bust of Brutus, in the Uffizi at Florence; the Moses at Rome has a grand-grotesque, a mock-heroic about it, which was scarcely intended by the artist, and which, instead of the Hebrew leader, gives it, with its fierce horns, and its immortal beard, a very curious likeness to some grave and pompous satyr, full of years and sylvan honours. We must see the figures in San Lorenzo before we can

learn how much passion and eloquent emotion a great sculptor "whose strong heart beats through stone" can convey to the marble. One group consists of a Virgin and Child, which, though unfinished, is very remarkable for the skill with which the drapery is wrought, and the unstudied ease and grace of the composition. The most remarkable figure, however, is that of Lorenzo de Medici. The knightly helm lowers over the brow, and darkens the passionless face, which, with the calm, but inscrutable eyes, is cast into deep shade. The head leans lightly upon one hand, the forefinger being raised contemplatively; the other hand rests upon the thigh. There is a cast of this figure in the Sydenham collection; but you must go to the chapel of the Medici ere you can rightly appreciate its terrible force and fascination, There, in the cold stillness—for the noises of the city are muffled ere they reach the sanctuary where the dead rest - there waits Lorenzo de Medici, watching silently, and with profound and ominous thoughtfulness, the fortunes of the Florentine state!

The bust of Brutus, like so many of Michael Angelo's works, is unfinished. There is, as it were, a gauzy film across the face, which has not yet been cleared away, and through which we catch, as through a veil, the stern, resolved, coarse features of the man. Such a statue brings us into closer and more intimate contact with the artist who made it, than does one, finished, perfected, with no taint of mortal incompleteness which, for aught that appears to the contrary,

may, like Diana of the Ephesians, have fallen from heaven. But here we can well believe that the artist has been at work an hour ago; we can trace amid the massive resolute folds of the drapery, the lines he had hewed ere he laid down his chisel for the day; and anon the door will open, and Buonarotti will come in and speak with And by his unfinished statues we are taught better than by those which have been completed and removed from the studio to the palace or the gallery, how instinctively and with what natural ease he grasped, as it were, the true human Through the coarse marble-strokes we can behold the figure growing into life. And with alf his impetuosity, arrogance, urgency—as though he would drag the life from the reluctant marble —he is never spasmodic or unnatural, the action is never strained or forced, the fair ideal which he sought with such fierce vehemence lay mostly like the old sorrow of the poet,—

Solid set, And moulded in colossal calm.

No contrast can be greater than that between Michael Angelo and Raphael. Buonarotti is the poet of action, Raphael of repose. The one dwells pensively upon the pencilling of a line, lingers lovingly over one of the placid thoughtful smiles which beam from the lips of his Madonnas; the other works vehemently at the marble, looks to the large effects of the fresco, and holds the delicate niceties of manipulation as fit work for women or children only. The portrait of Raphael

in the Uffizi is exceedingly characteristic. The rich brown autumnal hair, the broad-featured, innocent, girlish face, the dress folded over the bosom, with the white frill like a woman's, are all feminine, though at the same time there is repose, composure, and sedate consciousness of power expressed in the full and protruded under-lip-contemplative, not sarcastic. It is altogether just such a portrait as we associate with Raphael, and Raphael has been fortunate in his associations. His friendliness, ingenuousness, and pure simplicity of manners, brought him hosts of friends, and the verdict which they pronounced posterity has not ventured to challenge. Yet, standing here face to face with the Transfiguration, or even when musing over the sweetest of his Madonnas, are you not tempted at times to grow cynical and sceptical? Is not that inexplicable, imperturbable, unaccountable content a little insipid to you at times? pure, sweet, simple girl, no doubt, with admirable taste in dress, as all Italian girls have; yet surely there are depths of the heart which she has not sounded, glimpses into the woe and rapture of human life, and into the Divine glory which had overshadowed her, which she has not gained, and which other and perhaps inferior artists have sometimes contrived to express in their Madonnas?

Some of the most curious literature of this age, like the art of an earlier, is devoted to the representation of the religious emotions.* The

^{*} Though Mr. Keble is about the highest product of Protestantism, the Mediæval Catholicism contrived to turn out some very fair

same verdict must pass upon both. The Christian life is not a life that art can adequately illus-

poets. Peter the Venerable, Thomas of Celano, Abelard, Robert of France, and Adam St. Victor, who is pre-eminently the laureate of the Church. There are few poems more musical than Peter the Venerable's Hymn to the Magdalene, more pathetic or richly pictorial than the Stabat Mater of Jacopone da Todi, or more solemn and aweing than the Dies Inz, whose triple thunder, like the measured tread of an army of horsemen, peals in dire succession through the vaulted aisle. Many of the expressions, such as, O inepta et rustica mors! or alâ binâ caritatis, are very felicitous; and the epithets applied to the Virgin are often delightfully characteristic of sinlessness, innocence, repose. Mary is the Stella Matutina, the Rosa Mystica, the Columba formosissima, the white-bosomed dove which broods all day over its nest in the woodland, and dreams of a child-like love. She walks among the tender-leaved lilies, nay, herself the lily—inter rubeta lilium. They shew occasionally a simple passionate tenderness of feeling which takes us by surprise. The bride's "I am sick of love," is not more absorbed than its mediæval paraphrase—

An amor dolor sit
An dolor amor sit
Utrumque nescio;
Hoc unum sentio,
Jucundus dolor est
Si dolor amor est.

But commonly they want this reality of feeling—the touches are faint—there is the cold air of the cloister in them. The most thoroughly hearty and vital verses in the Church Latin are those of Walter Mapes, especially when he discourses of strong liquors. There is the true smack and relish of good wine in his drinking songs. What a jolly churchman he must have been!

Mihi est propositum in taberna mori; Vinum sit appositum morientis ori, Ut dicant cum venerint angelorum chori, "Deus sit propitius huic potatori!"

The song is not profane; the man is so entirely in earnest, his whole soul is so thoroughly saturated with monastic claret, that the prayer ceases to be irreverent, as it no doubt would have been had it come from the lips of an abstainer or a mere wit.

trate. The martyr who realizes in his life and by his death the great paradox of St. Paul—a paradox which lies at the root of whatever is noble in Christendom—" as dying, and behold we live; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things"—is less adapted for artistic representation than the heathen soldier who was unvexed by this subtle controversy. The frank beauty, the smooth cheek, the bright and confident eye, of the pagan, are more effective than the brow, which has been seared by mental passion, and the form which is bent by the toil of spiritual fight. It is possible that the latter may furnish the highest type of nobleness to the moralist; but it is a type far more difficult to record in the language of art than the other. The wasted cheek and the hollow eye may mask incorruptible constancy and deathless honour; but what are these to the rich, eager, and dazzling beauty, to the scornful and victorious manhood, of Apollo, or Antinous, or Alexander?*

Italy is the place of tombs, and Rome is the capital of Italy. There are the massive Etrurian sepulchres, clinging, hawklike, to the sides of the

^{*} Mr. Ruskin has said very finely—"The utmost glory of the human body is a mean subject of contemplation compared to the emotion, exertion, and character of that which animates it; the lustre of the limbs of the Aphrodite is faint beside that of the brow of the Madonna, and the divine form of the Greek god is degraded beside the passion and the prophecy of the vaults of the Sistine." In philosophy, in religion, and history, the soul is no doubt more than the body; but we must recollect that in art we can only reach the soul through the body, and that when we would express the highest manhood, we must express it by those features which constitute the bodily ideal.

precipices that skirt the Campagna; Pelasgic remains of a still earlier empire, and of a still more ponderous genius; the Roman tombs of Metella and the Scipios; the tombs in the catacombs; the tombs in St. Peter's; the tombs of Protestant heretics beside the Ostian gate. On this hand is the resting-place of Caius Cestus, the prætor, and Keats,

kissed straight and sheen In his Rome-grave, by Venus queen,

lies on the other. The slabs that have been taken from the catacombs to the Vatican are perhaps as full of interest as any. The rude inscriptions on the tombs of these early Christians, the unfailing dormit in pace inartistically scraped upon the stone, are affecting, when we associate them with the persecuted men who led such unquiet lives, and died so hardly. In truth, it is a strange co-mingling; every sort and condition of men, and each buried after his own fashion. The heathen warrior, the early martyr, the Christian pontiff, the exiled king, the English poet! And here they lie, amid a population which has gathered no power from their victories, and learned no lesson from their The Cæsars' palace is a heap of rubbish overrun with ivy; the chair of Hildebrand is guarded by the bayonets of the unbelieving French; the noblest works of ancient art are disfigured by the ungraceful wretchedness of the modern city, and the descendants of the men who conquered the world, sleep all day on the shady side of the street, and owe a sordid existence to the careless charity of the barbarian.

civilization advance, and to what? To the desolate barrenness of Nineveh, or to the ignoble wretchedness of Rome?

But we tire of this death-like Rome, whose woe and whose beauty weary us with a dull pain; and "Arno woos us to the fair white walls" of the Etruscan capital.

The prospect from the convent of Fiesole in the pleasant May-time is one of the most perfect in the world. A country clad with sombre olives, and clustering vines, and noble villas—a city in rich, strange, broken masses, snow white, mounted with quaintest towers, crowned by a dome, if not so architecturally correct, at least more peculiarly and quaintly picturesque than that of Rome—the noble vale of the Arno—the purple slopes of the Apennines! Florence is "the Etrurian Athens;" and no epithet could better describe the sense of refinement and luxury which attaches to the Tuscan capital. It is a charm altogether different from that which affects the stranger at Rome. the one you trace the footprints of a massive and barbarous people, whom you do not love, who have no living relation to you, or the age in which you live, or the people with whom you mix; in the other, the glow has not passed from the cheek, the lustre from the eye, the eloquence from the lip: this great Tuscan republic once formed a part of our modern European polity; she spoke to men as we have been taught to speak; her poets, her students, her artists, come into direct contact with ourselves, and with that society which they were

commissioned to form, and which we are privileged Horatius, and the battles of the Scito protect. pios, and the death of Cæsar, are classical tales which the schoolboy may construe; the contemporaries of the Albizzi are still represented in our practical politics; the honours which they conferred are still borne by our modern nobility; the wars they waged still influence the territorial distribution of European power. The frigid Roman could not appreciate the culture of our social, the large freedom of our intellectual, the wise restraints of our spiritual life; while for many of the motives, and principles, and ideas, which give it a peculiar and characteristic value, modern society is indebted to the free republics of Italy.

These republics, though they have had an illustrious historian, have hardly received their due. Probably no small states, with the exception of the Greek, ever exercised so important an influence over the progress of civilization. moral which their history conveys is very obvious. Their greatness was obtained by union without United to each other by a comcentralization. mon and national bond, there never was any abnegation nor denial of their individual life. United to resist the inroad of the barbarian and the tyranny of the noble, each yet preserved intact its local government and its municipal privileges. was not a union which attempted to secure the aggrandizement of one particular man, or of one particular state, but it was a union which gave free scope to the independent energies and the characteristic genius of each. They had not been taught

the maxim of modern politics—that the necessities of the empire demand the extinction of provincial habits and provincial patriotism; and the consequence was, that by refusing to exact a dead and barren uniformity, they preserved over Italy innumerable springs of a free and generous vitality, and nourished in every district of a prosperous country those elements which are necessary for the preservation of a national life.

And looking at them even as they exist today, it is impossible not to recognise the freedom and versatility of genius created by the individuality of the republics. In each provincial state or capital through which the Italian traveller passes, he finds some new, rich, fantastic, or quaint caprice, receiving a characteristic utterance in the popular architecture, or in the civic ambition. the mediæval remains existing in these stagnant local municipalities, no more interesting study engages us in Italy. There is the painted and palaced Genoa, lying, crescent-like, around that noble bay which once bore the riches of the barbaric East to its hardy seamen; and Sienna, sumptuously seated among her barren hills; and Pisa, with its tower and its baptistery, and its cathedral, where the rich light breaks over the azure ground, and athwart the golden stars, and through the Moorish pilasters; and Padua, where the influence of the Saracenic genius of the neighbouring Venetians may be traced in the Pagan cupolas and minarets it has raised to the immortal memory of Saint Antonio di Padova; and Milan, with its Gothic Duomo, whose army of spear-like pinnacles

crowd and cluster into the blue Italian heaven, and its magical panorama of the Alpine snows and pines stretched along the horizon—

A thousand shadowy-pencill'd valleys And snowy dells in a golden air—

and where, in the refectory of a decayed convent dedicated to our Lady of Grace, and in which a troop of Austrian cavalry is presently littered, you may still detect, through the film that has gathered over the faces, and the rents that time and the monks have made, the remains of the most famous painting in Italy—the celebrated Cenacolo of Da Vinci. The gallery of Bologna is rich with masterpieces of the followers of the Caracci; and it is a city of great and solemn churches, and cool and studious colonnades; a city where the sunlight seldom penetrates, where all things are as they were, and will be unto the end of time, and where they have built into the sky numberless pillars, fantastic, angular, Babel-like, as if, haply, to learn what may be doing in that noisy world of "progress" which lies beyond their own roofed, and covered, and shaded life. Haughty, massive, and defiant are the Florentine palaces, the Pitti, the Medici, the Palazzo Vecchio, with its ever memorable belfry. A wondrous tower that belfry is—the happy inspiration of a genial moment; but it takes time rightly to understand its spirit. first it may appear to you, as it has done to others, unmeaning and fantastic—a child's house of cards -a brick chimney grotesquely ornamented; but ultimately (not, however, until you have studied it for days), you will acknowledge that it is

the daring and intrepid idea of a great artist, and that there is a certain intricate and subtle beauty in its fragile arches and its airy lines. Florence, Bologna, Sienna, Genoa, Pisa—these are but a moiety of the great and independent townships which for centuries nourished throughout Italy the love of an intelligent liberty, and magnificently cultivated among rude and barbarous nations the virtues and the amenities of civilization.

To us Florence—Firenze la bella—is distinguished by a peculiar cheerfulness. It has none of the grave pensiveness we associate with a city of the dead, and it rejoices in many of the pecu-The people have liarities of our northern culture. the light hair, and the fair complexions, which are so seldom seen in the Italian towns, and are active, industrious, and cheerful. There is the Pitti for painting, and the Uffizi for sculpture; Buonarotti in the one, and Raphael in the other; the Venus of the Greek, and the Madonna of the Italian. And from the Palazzo Vecchio, through the solemn ranks of the dejected cypress, you may forthwith reach the ruined terrace of San Miniato, or among the grapes of Bellosguardo witness the glory of a sunset in the Italian summer.*

^{*} It is difficult now to think or write about Florence without recalling Mrs. Browning's vivid and striking picture of the noble city in Aurora Leigh. No one who has ever entered "that house, at Florence, on the hill of Bellosguardo," can have learned without a keen feeling of sorrow that its light is quenched, and that the fervid, intense, and generous heart, of one of the truest and most transparently guileless of women, has ceased to beat. It was many years ago, indeed, too evident to those who knew her most intimately that she was not to be one of "the long livers;" and that the passionate

Of the painters who are peculiarly Florentine, there are two who cannot be rightly appreciated except in their own city—Fra Angelico and Andrea del Sarto. Del Sarto excels in composi-

sensibilities (for the ordinary quietness of her manner was only the mask of tremulous sensitiveness, and a suppressed fire)—

Fretted the pigmy body to decay, And o'er informed the tenement of clay.

Yet, somehow, the news of her death came, at the last, abruptly, and like an unlooked-for calamity. The "tenement" might be frail; but it seemed so full of life, so radiant with the strength of the spirit, that one insensibly forgot by how slight a cord, by how few ties, it was held to the world. These are her lines on Florence—the city which she loved with a love, as bitter in its day of degradation, as proud in its day of triumph, as his—that other exile—whose dust rests at Ravenna,—"Like Scipio buried by the upbraiding shore,"—

I found a house at Florence, on the hill
Of Bellosguardo. 'Tis a tower that keeps
A post of double observation o'er
The valley of Arno—holding as a hand
The outspread city—straight toward Fiesole,
And Mount Morello, and the setting sun—
The Vallambrosan mountains to the right,
Which sun-rise fills as full as crystal cups,
Wine-filled, and red to the brim, because it's red.
No sun could die, nor yet be born, unseen
By dwellers at my villa; morn and eve
Were magnified before us in the pure
Illimitable space and pause of sky,
Intense as angel's garment blanched with God,
Less blue than radiant.

Beautiful

The city lay along the ample vale,
Cathedral, tower, and palace, piazza, and street;
The river trailing like a silver cord
Through all, and curling loosely, both before
And after, over the whole stretch of land
Sown whitely up and down its opposite slope
With farms and villas.

tion and colouring; he is specially great as a colourist; the prevailing tone being a rich, dark, mellow brown, remarkably effective. His best works are those in the Tribune and the Pitti, Madonnas in various churches, and a Cenacolo in a decayed convent beyond the walls, which in breadth, simplicity, and artistic effectiveness, rivals the Da Vinci at Milan. The two Assumptions in the Pitti are very remarkable. In the one the face of the Virgin is youthful, in the other furrowed with the lines of age. The latter is thus one of the few paintings of the Catholic Church where the Madonna has lost the sense of youthfulness, and of a comeliness which is not hurt by Generally speaking, however, there is a certain sameness in his conception of the Mater Unigeniti; the face is invariably long thin, the chin tapered, the hair drawn back from the temple, and braided behind, so that by the family likeness we can immediately recognise almost any of his Madonnas. His conception of the boy-life, however, is admirable; free, joyous, and unconventional, it affords a striking contrast to the staid, elaborate, and ponderous childhood of the Dutch artist—a childhood of hoops, and Mechlin laces. His young Christ, frills, and especially, is always remarkably good. The ordinary vivacity of youth is united with something more divine. We can trace in the collected expression, in the wise sweetness, in the serene depths of the eye, the presence of the indwelling God, informing, yet not obscuring, the human childhood of the boy!

One cannot help liking and loving Fra Angelico da Fiesole, and he is almost the only one of the præ-Raphaelites whom a man who does not believe in præ-Raphaelism can thoroughly relish. There is more individuality in his works, more of the man himself, and less of the mere artist, than in those of any other painter I know. Fiesole, painting was not a fine art, but a religion. It was thus that he discoursed to his countrymen of truth and beauty—thus that he expressed his aspirations after the divine life. And to us he is less the great painter than the humble, and pious, and patient monk, whose narrow cell in the Dominican convent, was irradiated by the fine and grave enthusiasm, which enabled him, better than other men, to comprehend and anticipate the glory that should follow.

The evening is drawing to a close as we reach on the Bologna road the mountain ridge above Fiesole. Golden is the sunset, wonderful the hues of purple that are distributed over the hills, delicious the soft, pensive, distant note of the cuckoo, in the still seclusion of these mountain valleys. One last glorious glimpse of the gay capital of Etruria, and then the night comes down upon us, rapidly, like a shadow, and we begin the ascent of the higher Apennines,—a waste and dreary tract of granite rocks, against which the full moon strikes noiselessly her silver shafts. With the first flush of dawn, we are roused among the decayed villas, and the neglected gardens, that surround Bologna.

Bologna was the birth-place of the Caracci, and

the school of their followers. For the Caracci I can "strain no welcome," and what I value in the school was not taught by the masters. Both Guido and Domenichino, in whatever they had of good, were essentially original; they owed nothing to their teachers, except certain formulas with which they might very profitably have dispensed. What I have said of Fra Angelico and Andrea del Sarto, is equally true of Guido and Domenichino,—they cannot be rightly appreciated except in their own city. All the most remarkable examples of their art, with the single exception of the St. Jerome, are in the gallery of Bologna. Guido's larger works are imposing and impressive pictures, and the touch of genuine native feeling, or of graceful classic sentiment, is singularly acceptable after the monotonous church-tone of the real Italian artist. There is a rare mournfulness in The Massacre of the Innocents; and the figure of the dying God in The Crucifixion is impressive as a Christ by Vandyke. But the Madonna della Pieta is, undoubtedly, his masterpiece. The earthly despair of the Mother has been calmed into a divine resignation. The hysterica passio is subdued, the passionate tears are dried, and though the features are rigid and bloodless as with past pain, still the speechless agony is over, and as she looks up to heaven in confident humility, she is able devoutly to acquiesce,—it is needful that He should have gone away! There is, indeed, one lovely painting by Guido beyond the walls of Bologna, the celebrated Beatrice in the Barberini. Apart from all association, this face has a strange fasci-

nation which no copy has ever effectively rendered. Scarcely a single copy indeed of the faces in these Italian paintings is at all successful; the copyist traces the lines, and follows the design, but he cannot see through them into the divine thought by which they are penetrated, and thus the most skilful and accurate reproduction is destitute of that which gives the original its imperishable value. But the libels on Beatrice, which are scattered over the galleries of a Christian and critical society, are even more scandalous than common. Guido is said to have met her as she was led out to die; and the Master has made that dying look immortal. folds of her yellow hair fell around her neck in wavy ripples; her eyelids were red and swollen with the tears of an agony that had blighted her girlhood; and though the light of her mournful eyes was turned inward, yet he caught, or fancied that he caught, a bewildered glance, scarcely appealing, but that might have been appealing, had it retained sufficient consciousness of the world without. This was the Beatrice that Guido met, for this is the Beatrice of the Barberini. the well-known St. Agnes, by Domenichino, in this gallery, it is not necessary to speak here; the Madonna del Rosario is a picture of the same class, and points the same moral. There is the same division, the celestial and the terrestrial, the sorrow of the human and the consolation of the divine, the martyr and the Madonna. ish forms, especially, over whose prostrate bodies a horseman is savagely spurring, are very beautifully and touchingly rendered. The faith in a divine protection triumphs over, though it does not altogether subdue, the weakness of the woman; there is still the shrinking, the frightened gesture, the womanly anguish of pain. Without these indeed the painting would lose its true pathos, and become as unnatural, and therefore as repulsive, as this representation of St. Peter, the Dominican, beside it, where the saint, although the artist has unfeelingly thrust a hatchet into his head, and a sword into his stomach, stands the whole thing with the most perfect composure, and manifestly rather likes it than otherwise. The dark hair of the elder girl contrasts with the deathlike hue of her face, for the iron has already entered into her heart: but still with her own body, and with a dying instinct, she seeks to shield the other, whose lighter hair, and slighter form, and more delicate, childlike bloom, bespeak the younger and more tender sister. The serenity of heaven is not disturbed by their dying terror; still sits the Madonna with her patient smile, surrounded by her adoring angels; not in scorn of the agony, like the god of the lotus-eater, but rather as an assurance that if that last anguish be well borne, there is a rest remaining—that the human pain is not comparable with the glory that is in store. Such glimpses as these into the pathos of the human heart are indicative of the genuine artist, and coming from Domenichino are especially noticeable. For, despite the fire of his genius, there is a certain mannerism and formality in his work. His habitual practice of dividing his canvas

into artificial compartments gives his pictures, moreover, somewhat of the appearance of certain old-fashioned eighteenth century prints, which most of us have seen abroad, where there is always a central figure or figures, and the rest of the space is devoted to an elaborate border, marginal angels, incidental specimens of domestic architecture, festoons of flowers, a bust of the reigning sovereign, and in short a little of everything, however remote from the special interest, that the vagrant fancy of the artist chose to insert. Yet with all this, it is impossible not to feel, in looking on his larger works, that among the artists of Italy, you have met with no one, whose power of expressing directly what he wishes to say, is more graphic or genuinely artistic.

The inevitable railway has now crossed the Lagoon, rather, as I think, marring the impression of the approach to Venice. But of old, we quitted the mainland at Fusina, and turned the boat's prow right out to sea. The night breeze, blackening the waves, blew in sharply and shrilly from the Adriatic. The Italian shore from which we started, gradually grew distant and indistinct, until it disappeared in the growing darkness—all but one snowy peak of the Euganeans, on which the sunset lingered. Then the night came down upon us in grim earnest, and found us still labouring For a moment it seemed a in the sea-trough. wild and extravagant whim--the mad freak of an Englishman—at such an hour, in our crazy craft, and as the wind drove the foam into our

faces, to tempt the caprice of the sea. But the boatmen held on their way collected and undisturbed, and hummed at times to their oars short snatches of monotonous song. For why should they fear? This silent and desolate water was one of the beaten highways of the nations. For centuries it had formed the main road between the monarchies of Europe, and its most polished and warlike republic. And now, as we turned our faces to the East, and looked through the drifting foam, the red moon rose from the Adriatic, dispersed the clouds, and discovered along the horizon, amid a charmed pause in the waves, the white domes and cupolas of Venice.

At present the Trieste boat is to be preferred. Though by this route, you do not obtain, perhaps, the same vivid impression of a city driven from the land, and adrift among the breakers, yet the labyrinth of narrow and squalid canal, through which by the other you must pass, ere you arrive at your hotel, is avoided. You are ushered at once into the presence of the Republic. All the noble edifices associated with its national and historical life are grouped together on this its furthest shore. No land is visible from the Piazza except the Lido. The winged lion, as he paws his lair, looks out upon the sea. The breeze that sweeps through the pillared screen of the ducal gallery comes salt 'Twas bravely done. from the Adriatic. had been spurned from her native soil. She had been forced, like a sea-mew, to build her nest upon the surf, and to stay it among the reeds. lo! she accepts her doom; and turning with beautiful scorn from the betrayer, casts her white arms, as a swan its wings, upon the waves.

Mr. Ruskin has described many of the architectural decorations of Venice by images derived from the sea. The white cupolas rise like wreaths of sea-foam in the dawn; the crests of the arches toss themselves into the sky in flashes of sculptured spray. It is impossible not to feel that there is a certain propriety in the association which this language is meant to indicate; for it is difficult to over-estimate the effect which the sea exerts over minds of a certain order that are much exposed to its influence. I have known many men upon whom certain aspects of the sea, the moaning of the winter wind, the flapping of the wings of sea-birds over desolate reefs of rock, the monotonous beat of heavy waves upon a bleak extent of barren sand and bent, have been so wrought and impressed, that the impression could be detected in almost every condition of their intellectual activity, in the habit of their thought, in the melody of their sentences, even in the tone and cadence of their speech. And it could hardly fail, that to those who lived veritably among the waves, the sea should acquire an intense and peculiar significance; or that the Venetian should have been so subjugated by this perpetual fellowship, that it should have sensibly impressed his art and his architecture, and made his city,—the queen and mistress of the sea for centuries,—the expression, as it were, of the most ideal and poetic features of the Adriatic.

And at Venice you truly meet the ocean.

TERRA SANTA.

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You have not been deceived. The sea there has all the sense and savour of the sea. It is the sea itself that floats your gondola, that carries you along spacious canals, that compasses you round about on either side. Venice is essentially a seacity. It lies in the sea, and the sea-weed clings to its palaces, and the sea-tides ebb and flow in its streets, and the whole story and mystery of the sea is wrought within the thoroughfares of a crowded mart, and penetrates the very heart and life of a brave and generous people. And though around Venice, as has been exquisitely said, it is the sea stayed and subdued into "a strange spacious rest," yet you have only to cross the Lido to meet the salt and crested billows that drive right over from the Dalmatian shore.

Throughout all the isle,
There is no covert, no retired cave,
Unhaunted by the murmurous noise of waves.

But rightly to understand Venice, you must spend many days in your gondola among the shoals and islands which stud the lagoon. The lagoon, in popular speech, may be said to comprehend the land and water which surround Venice, and more particularly that portion of them which lies toward the shore. It is a strange and somewhat dreary extent. Fancy a wide, green, sandy swamp; lined along the margin by gigantic reeds, dear to the heart of the teal and the mallard; covered with water-plants, and the scattered huts of watermen, and legions of aquatic birds whose shrill and mournful cries mingle with the plash and murmur of the gathering tide; intersected

by canals and great spaces of water, along which, as though it were along the land, white sails speed quickly and noiselessly; in the distance, on one hand, the Euganean hills, veiled in their purple mist, on the other, the rich, fragile, delicate city, glistening and sparkling in the sun. There are larger islands too, here and there, on which you find, among wretched hovels, rude primitive churches, not without interest,—Torcello, especially, in its loneliness, its desertedness, its simplicity. Of all places in the world, Torcello is perhaps the fittest that could be selected for the bleak description of Tennyson—

A place of tombs, Where lie the mighty bones of ancient men, Old knights, and over them the sea wind sings, Shrill, chill, with flakes of foam.

The old porteress, with her rusty keys, will admit you within the deserted church. The plain rafters of the cupola, the plain stone ledges which sweep round the high altar, the plain block of marble which forms the reading desk from which these stout-hearted fugitives were exhorted and warned, are all suggestive of the unpretending devotion of homely and simple men. It does not seem to you like a church that is decaying, though the salt sea-green that has crept around the pillars, as though they had been covered with clinging sea-weed, attests the destroying action of the water.* If you enter the sacristy, you will

^{*} I am told by a friend who visited Torcello last summer, that the process of white-washing (!) the old church is going on—very successfully. Can the force of Vandalism any further go?

find the intimation of some local fast, or ecclesiastical tax, dated a few centuries back, pasted upon the wall, and a surplice of the primitive church, hung up against the door, by some worthy shepherd of the flock, who has been dust for a generation. Languidly through the encrusted window comes the faded light, and rests lazily upon an uncouth mosaic, or creeps stealthily round a delicate capital. All day it is very still, and quiet, and cold, so still that the silence is disturbed even by the solitary spider, who, up somewhere among the rafters, works unweariedly at his ghostly net. What happens when the sun has set in the Adriatic, and the pale moonlight falls along the aislewhether the sleepers who, with their hands clasped on their breasts, lie upon the tombs, sleep on, or whether they arise and hold all manner of ghostly conclave upon the buono stata of the future Venice —I do not know; but doubtless that old wiseacre could tell, if it pleased him, many an eerie tale of what has taken place, as he lay coiled up in his hole, and looked down with his restless, watchful eyes upon the arena below. No! the old church is not decaying, for there is not life enough in it even for decay.

It is a strange, but a true, story. True it is that a great people did take possession of such reeded and desolate islands as these are now, and staying their foundations, as best they might, among the waves, carried into them a sumptuous and oriental culture, and clothed their barrenness with all the richest and most poetic elements of an intellectual and imaginative life. Examine them

well, and when you have keenly felt their utter loneliness and barrenness, come back into the city, and study the unfaded colours of Titian, Veronese, Tintoretto; the marvellous architecture of these princely palaces, an architecture at once so massive and so buoyant, so formed to resist the action of the waves, so relieved by a tender and fertile imagination; the graceful and delicate façade of the cathedral, rich with the gold and marble and quaint poetic devices of a superb and imaginative people; the great piazza at night, with its long ranges of arches suffused and brilliant with warm light, and crowded with rare and picturesque costume, the Albanian, the Osmanli, the Greek; then, when you can best recall the pride and gaiety of its ancient state, will you best be able to realise the marvellous change which was wrought by the courage which founded, the energy which sustained, and the genius which adorned, this great and courtly republic.

No school of painting has been more warmly defended, or more severely criticised, than the Venetian. It has, I own, many characteristics which compel from me a direct and cordial sympathy. Foremost among these is the freedom of its tone, and the nationality of its spirit. It is not employed merely to record the conventional misery of the Christian martyr, or the stereotyped ecstacy of the Christian saint, but it descends to the common earth, deals with the men and women of the day, commemorates the worthies of the age, and relates, with a rich and emblazoned pen, the achievements of the republic. The churches them-

selves are rich with trophies of secular triumph; the altars are hung with banners snatched from conquered nations; statues of victorious admirals, and of Doges who wed the Adriatic, replace the effigy of priest and pontiff. Art is released from the exclusive service of the church as it is nowhere else in Italy, and becomes the willing handmaid of the great merchant commonweal.

Again, in such a city as Venice, where a lighter fancy, and a cultivation largely indebted to the splendid caprice of the East, had mitigated the austere gravity of the European intellect, the art naturally assumed a more sportive and luxurious tone. So that we find her painters intrepidly uniting with the most sacred subjects, the tender and glowing elements that are derived from a voluptuous appreciation of human life. But we must not mistake the direction of this tendency. Look, for example, as more precisely illustrating its character, at its representation of women, at Titian's in particular, as its most notable apostle. Critics, in reference to this topic, are in the habit of confounding Titian with Rubens. No comparison can be more unjust to the Venetian. Rubens could not represent the woman-life: he never touched it without defiling it. His province was altogether different. What he could deal with successfully was the purely animal life, the rich, and lavish life of the tropics more especially. lustrous fur, the sleepy savageness, the stealthy grace, the infinite luxuriousness, of the leopard cub, and the river god, are rendered with exquisite vivacity. It may be said that his most famous

paintings are occupied with other subjects; but even of the Antwerp "Christ" the criticism holds good; for the peculiar effectiveness of that painting is derived from its curiously plain, homely, and unaffected rendering of the mere animal body without life, which, as associated with a mystery which we cannot penetrate, has always retained over the imagination a certain morbid and unwholesome fascination. Now, Titian may not have the highest insight into the woman-life, but he has at least none of the essential vileness of the Dutchman. His Flora, his Venus in the Tribune, and his Sacred and Profane Love in the Borghese, are all copied from some captivating and bewitching ideal. In each we have the golden hair, the delicate life of the complexion, the fresh, meditative, voluptuous beauty. There may not be, perhaps, much of the soul, or of the higher heart and imagination, but still they are always redeemed from the grossness of Rubens, by a certain abstract and indescribable refinement, by the subtle woman-grace, if not by the divine woman-purity. And this criticism may be very widely applied to all the maxims of the Venetian artist. Nothing can surpass his richness, fluency, and brilliant imagination; but the moderation of his genius is quite as conspicuous as its versatility. The arrangement and ordering of the picture is always, as in the Venetian Slave of Tintoretto, Bonifazio's Presentation of Moses, and the Rosaro Titian, superb and sumptuous, as though the artist had been used to the regal ermine, and the stately ceremonial, of Doges and Kings; but, at the same time, there is none of the

gilding and tinsel of the court lacquey; and the colouring, however lavish, is invariably chaste and harmonious. The drawing also, though neither sharp, hard, nor coarse, is perfectly precise and distinct, exquisitely clear, delicate, and transparent. Here Titian specially excels. He says what he has to say without any effort, but with a clear and joyous resoluteness, the fascination of which it is impossible to resist. He was no transcendentalist. There was neither weakness nor mistiness in his work. He loved men as they were,—and women too; and with abandoned devotees, and crazy saints, he had nothing in common-

A great, if somewhat fantastic, critic has asserted, that for anything their paintings tell us to the contrary, these painters might never have visited "the sun-girt" city where they spent their If it refer to the introduction of natural form, the criticism is, perhaps, accurate enough; but would these men have been what they were, had they not been Venetians? Surely not. Nowhere else could they have obtained the transparent shadows, the aërial glow and gloom, the savour of oriental richness, which they have wrought into their human subject. The stirring human story was what they tried chiefly to express; but with the manner in which that story is told, the ineffaceable impression produced on their minds by a lifelong familiarity with the natural specialities of Venice, with golden sun-risings and bloody sunsets on the purple Lagoon, is bound up for ever. Throughout Tintoretto's works, especially, there are ringing echoes of those deep-sea murmurs,

Which his first endeavouring tongue Caught, infant-like, from the far-foamed sands.

The walls of the Ducal Palace and of the Academy are rich with works of the Venetian The Assumption, by Titian; The Rape of Proserpine, by Paul Veronese; The Paradise, The Marriage of Ariadne, and the Venetian Slave, by Tintoretto, are all splendid specimens of an unrivalled mastery over colour, and of the grace, vivacity, and courtliness of the Venetian intellect. The Assumption is Titian's most ambitious work. The Almighty leans from the heavens; a winged messenger bears a golden crown towards the Virgin; beautiful cherub faces, the fair-haired Venetian children, sustain and welcome the ascending Madonna. The expression of her face is very vivid and animated, but the form is heavy, and the action laboured. It wants the supreme and aërial abandon of Murillo's Virgin, and the introduction of certain common-place looking gentlemen, who represent the Apostles, destroys the vague poetic sense, of some ethereal distance in space, which the Conception Immaculée conveys. But in its glory of colouring, in the light that seems to stream from out the painting, and especially in the effect of a certain violet aurora around the border, which gradually brightens into a lustrous white, and which I have seen nowhere else, unless in an autumn sunset on the Mediterranean, it is not surpassed by any Italian painting. Of The Paradise of Tintoretto it is difficult to speak in terms which may not appear strained and exaggerated. The prodigious extent of the canvas

—it is a painting thirty yards in length, and twelve in height—is not otherwise interesting to the art student than as evidencing the unrivalled taste, the exquisite knowledge of composition, and the wonderful command and composure of the art which could distribute so great a multitude of figures without impairing the sense of unity, or weakening the impressive interest of the whole. In the Paradise also, though sorely soiled and faded, the mastery of the Venetians over the subtleties and refinements of colour is very apparent. There are in it, so to speak, two series of figures—the one in front, the other behind, and seen through the opened ranks of the first. The light from the divine centre appears to fall between the two, and, while those in the distance have the indistinctness of objects seen through a dazzling reflection of light, the dark figures in the nearer heaven are brought out in vivid contrast. this arrangement the absence of any confusion in the grouping, or of any monotony in the effect, is mainly to be attributed.

Pilgrims in the old days travelled far to lave their limbs in the sacred stream; and we, too, ere we quit the Holy Land, must bathe once more in its blessed waters.

So yesterday we disembarked on the near side of the Lido, and walked across the narrow island—through rank herbage, salt with the sea-foam, and tenanted by bright-eyed lizards in green and golden armour, who glided noiselessly through the grass, and into the sand as we approached. On

the opposite shore a swarthy islander, with his patched pantaloons tucked up to his loins, was wading about in the shallow water, fishing for the bright-coloured shells which, with gold and silver stuffs, Oriental gems, perfumes, and spicery, one buys in the Merceria. He had a considerable heap already collected upon the snowy sand, and when he saw us he came ashore, and insisted on our buying a capello di mare, and a curiously twisted buckie bristling with fierce spikes, for which, much to his contentment, we gave him a swanzeger.

"Have care, my masters, have care," he exclaimed as he saw us undress. "The ebb runs strong to the sea—it will take you into deep water."

However, we plunged in, confident in our seaboard training, which had wrestled with the angry streams of the north, and could baffle, we thought, the syren caresses of the Adriatic. The Adriatic! For now we had passed all the islands; the Lagoon, with its charmed quiet, lay behind our backs; and we were cradled on the fragrant Nay, perhaps we daringly bosom of the sea itself. deemed-strong swimmers as we were-that the waves might take us with them, an they listed; for it was Greece, we knew, that lay along the opposite shore; we almost fancied that we could trace the outline of its rocky coast on the horizon; and into this very water the sun-god of Homer plunged! The infatuation was only momentary. quickly recovered our senses, and then Greek and god had both gone down to darkness, down even into Hades, and left the sea they made half-divine,

to a brace of naked, irreverent Englishmen, and the snow-white mews who stared and screamed at us from aloft.

We have left Venice, and as the bells of the churches on her scattered islands answer each other through the night, journey on toward the west. For here, where Verona in the lap of the Alps guards the rich plains of Lombardy, ends our Italian pilgrimage. There is a great storm up yonder in the Tyrol-serried columns of foam-like mist hurry along the sides of the Helvetian mountains—a mysterious cloud hangs low down upon the valley, and out of it come smothered and muffled sounds, as of voices among the hills. To the old Italian these mountain recesses, with their mysterious clouds and tempests, formed the barrier between his sumptuous refinement, and the uncouth and barbarous nations who lay beyond the pale of his civilisation. This is now changed. The Italian has become the slave of the barbarian, the Goth has inherited his liberty and his culture. Beneath a wintry and inclement sky, and upon a barren and inhospitable soil, have arisen a humaner culture, a more powerful and generous liberty. Our age is somewhat intolerant of the past, and is often not unwisely content that the dead should bury its dead. But surely it will one day attempt to repay the debt it owes to Italy and the Italians?



THE STATESMEN OF THE TORIES, A PLEA FOR PARTY.

We, we have seen the intellectual race
Of giants stand, like Titans, face to face—
Athos and Ida—with a dashing sea
Of eloquence between, which flowed all free,
As the deep billows of the Ægean roar
Betwixt the Hellenic and the Phrygian shore.

BYRON.

THE Great Commoner is the most imposing figure which the last century produced. His shadow stretches across it like the shadow of a colossus. Chatham was by no means, indeed, a completely-furnished or well-balanced statesman. A certain splendour and slovenliness mingle in his character. His sister used to say that her brother knew nothing accurately except the Faery Queen. But a politician who, in the eighteenth century, could muse with delight over the purest and most noble work of the English imagination, probably

stood very much alone among his contemporaries, and must have owned certain rare and elevated virtues, and a generous and vivid genius. What his speeches were can now be at best vaguely guessed; but even yet these "shreds of unconnected eloquence" remain in their way unrivalled. They are struck with the authentic fire of the imagination—of the imagination in the full sweep of excited and eloquent emotion. Half a dozen of these "luminous sentences" are almost all that continue notable to us in fifty years of political history. They are the masterful words of a great man—haughty and arrogant words often—but haughty and arrogant because the speaker, in the pride of his integrity, scorned all meanness and baseness, and finesse. "I come not here armed at all points with law cases and acts of parliament, with the statute-book doubled down in dogs-ears, to defend the cause of liberty," he exclaimed, with fine scorn, in answer to Grenville's argument on our right to tax the colonies. "Such are your wellknown characters and abilities," he said, addressing the Government of Lord North, "that sure I am that any plan of reconciliation, however moderate, wise, and feasible, must fail in your hands. Who, then, can wonder that you should put a negative on any measure which must annihilate your power, deprive you of your emoluments, and at once reduce you to that state of insignificance for which God and nature designed you?" Again, when Lord Rockingham's Administration solicited his support-"Pardon me, gentlemen," he said, bowing to them with that reserved and haughty

courtesy with which, more than with any other characteristic, we identify him; "confidence is a plant of slow growth in an aged bosom." of the speeches he made in defence of the revolted colonists are grand and vehement. "As an Englishman by birth and principle, I recognise to the Americans their supreme inalienable right to their property—a right which they are justified to defend till the last extremity. To maintain this principle is the common cause of the Whigs on the other side of the Atlantic and on this. liberty to liberty engaged,' that they will defend themselves, their families, and their country. In this cause they are immovably allied; it is the alliance of God and nature—immutable, eternal fixed as the firmament of heaven." The assurance which he entertained of our ultimate failure was pressed home with the earnestness of supreme "I say we must necessarily undo conviction. these violent oppressive acts; they must be repealed; you will repeal them; I pledge myself for it, that you will in the end repeal them; I stake my reputation on it; I will consent to be taken for an idiot if they are not finally repealed!" he would not consent to compromise the Imperial authority, nor agree to Franklin's proposal, that the King's troops should not be quartered in America without the consent of the provincial Legislatures; and he enshrined his argument in a noble metaphor. "Such a condition," he exclaimed, "plucks the master feather from the eagle's wing."

Yet Lord Chatham's career, judged of by the

ordinary criterion of Ministerial success, may be said to have comparatively failed. He was far oftener in opposition than in office: his own Ministry was feeble: on many of the most important questions of the day the king and the nation refused to sanction his policy. But Chatham, during the four years between 1757 and 1761. when with splendid firmness and sagacity he conducted the great war against France, did what no other statesman of his age did, or could have done. For seventy years England had been a nation divided against itself. The affections of one half of the people were fixed upon an exiled housesæva Pelopis domus. The spirit of active rebellion had been at length extinguished, but the old animosities still burnt on; and the winning party itself did not feel very proud of the throne it had gained for an alien and unpopular dynasty. was Chatham who revived the old national feeling. He made the Englishman again proud of his country. He recalled the sense of patriotism, of national union, of a combined corporate life. The restoration of that spirit of loyal obedience and dutiful attachment to the State, without which, as Burke eloquently said, "Your army would be a base rabble, and your navy nothing but rotten timber," was directly due to the genius and character of Lord Chatham. He was a great man, and he communicated his strong manhood to the The picture of the Great Minister wielding the thunderbolts of war, and again, as in the old times, vindicating the authority of the English name, fired the imagination of the people, and

welded them together as one man. He found England divided and dispirited; he left it united and exultant.

As the veteran gladiator was borne from the arena, two youthful athletes appeared upon it—Charles James Fox and William Pitt. Lady Holland writes to her husband in 1767—"I have been this morning with Lady Hester Pitt, and there is little William Pitt, now eight years old, and really the cleverest child I ever saw, and brought up so strictly and so proper in his behaviour, that—mark my words—that little boy will be a thorn in Charles's side as long as he lives." A curious womanly intuition, fulfilled to the letter! William Pitt was indeed a thorn in Fox's side as long as he lived.

It has of late become customary with certain writers to depreciate the services and the wisdom of Pitt; they admit, indeed, that he was a stately Minister, gifted with copious and weighty eloquence; but they assert that he cannot be regarded as a subtle or sagacious leader, and they see in his unrivalled success only an accumulation of fortunate accidents. On the other hand, it is asserted, in the same quarter, that Fox, in this very capacity, was eminently distinguished; and that the reason why his labours were so seldom crowned with official recognition, is to be traced to a combination of disastrous mischances, over which the most forecasting prudence could have exercised no control. This estimate appears to us singularly Pitt was "a thorn" in Fox's side, no unhappy. doubt; but he was so because the Whig leader

recklessly left his advances open and unguarded. Fox's attacks upon Pitt always recoiled without effect: the Whig leader's impulsive and desultory genius was no match for the cool and prescient sagacity of the Minister. Fox's career was a failure: Pitt's, from the very beginning, a splendid success. The prolonged authority of the son of Chatham was not an accident. What is the explanation? The nation admired the lavish gifts of the one; but it had confidence in the other. It is the triumph of *character*.

A brief survey will make this clear.

Neither the public nor the private character of Fox was calculated to inspire the people with confidence.

His private life was against him. sessed, indeed, many amiable social qualitieswarm affections, a placable and forgiving disposition, a sweet and winning temper, which nothing could sour. He was thus immensely popular among his associates. But his reputation with the country was bad; and the reputation was not unjustified. His early career was profligate; and even his connection with Mrs. Armistead *—which probably did much to reclaim him-was foreign to the feelings of a strictly moral people. His father introduced him to the gaming-table at Spa before he was fourteen: and he quickly became one of the most fierce and reckless gamblers in a gambling age. The purchase of the annuities which he had granted to cover his losses at play, cost Lord Holland more than a hundred and forty thousand

^{*} Mrs. Armistead afterwards became Mrs. Fox.

pounds. As he mixed much in society the details of his "interior" life were well known to the public. He rose late, and before he had quitted his bed-room in St. James's Street was surrounded by a group of pleasant, witty, and accomplished dis-Many men who were very famous then, and some who will be very famous for ever, attended these matutinal levees. Wrapped in a "foul linen night gown" that only partially concealed "his black and bristly person," his hair matted, and his hands unwashed, the profligate dictator marshalled the forces of the Opposition, and devised the tactics of the campaign. The day he spent at Newmarket—in the evening he assailed the Minister —the night was consumed at Almack's. celebrated club in Pall-Mall had been established by himself; and within its walls, their faces muffled, their laced ruffles protected with leather-straps "such as footmen wear," the youthful aristocracy of England scattered, with a cast of the dice, the hoarded savings of centuries. Long after day-break the Whig leader once more landed in St. James's Street—that is, when he could reach home, and it was not necessary to leave him under the suppertable in what Grattan called Fox's negligent grandieur! This was terrific work—only a most vigorous and elastic constitution could have stood Fox, physically and intellectually, braved it it. with splendid impunity: to his associates, the wild dissipation seemed only to add a fresher charm to his eloquence, and a keener point to his wit; but at the same time it effectually alienated the mass of the people from him.

Nor was his public life more reassuring. The first Lord Holland was utterly destitute of principle. According to his creed every patriot had his price, and every vote in the House of Commons could be bought. Endowed, like his son, with warm affections, and a serene and equitable temper, which he preserved to the last—(" If Mr. Selwyn calls again," he said to his servant when he was dying, "let him in; if I am alive I shall be very glad to see him; and if I am dead, he will be very glad to see me")—he was yet utterly untrustworthy. The political latitudinarianism of the father was supposed to have descended to the son. The impression was false indeed; for Fox, especially in later life, had many strong and even vehement convictions. But his conduct undoubtedly often gave a colour to the imputation; and he suffered in consequence.

Gibbon has asserted that Fox was a great and sagacious leader—" Fox, who, in the conduct of a party, approved himself equal to the conduct of an Empire." The words were written towards the close of the historian's life, and when ample materials for judgment were beside him. But surely no man can be regarded as a great chief whose tactics alienate his party and the people; and at the time when Gibbon wrote, the nation had lost all confidence in the wisdom and capacity of the Whig leaders, and the Whig party was divided against itself. Fox was looked upon as a reckless debauché who spent his days in drinking and gambling with the Prince of Wales. Sheridan's want of application and steadiness was universally

acknowledged, and had been piquantly illustrated. "No applications"—a notice, it was said, stuck on the door of his office during the time he was Secretary to the Treasury, announced— "no applications can be received here on Wednesdays, nor any business done during the remainder of the week." And when the party, with its traditional exclusiveness, could find no place for Burke in his own Administration, it seemed tacitly to sanction the popular impression that his great schemes of domestic and imperial policy were impracticable. Its recent manœuvres, moreover, had created an impression that the men were not only incompetent but unprincipled. Office was regarded as the sole object of their mercenary ambition. tactics of the Opposition—from a Whig point of view especially—were certainly for many years particularly unhappy. The junction with Lord North, the conflict of 1784, the question of the Regency, and the French Revolution, were the principal events that took place between 1782 What was Fox's conduct in relation and 1792. to these events? Was it consistent with his position as the leader of the Whig party—the party calling itself the popular? The junction with an ultra-Tory like Lord North was censured by his personal friends as "an unnatural alliance," and he himself admitted that it was "a measure which only success could justify." In 1784 the conflict was one substantially between the Parliament and the people. The right to an ultimate verdict vested in the people, was surely a doctrine

entirely in consonance with the historical traditions of the Whigs. But this right Fox obstinately denied. Again, in 1788, on the question of the Regency, what course did he adopt? He asserted that the Prince of Wales was gifted with an inherent and inherited authority, which he could, under circumstances like those which had then occurred, assume, without the sanction or intervention of the Houses of Parliament—an authority so unmitigated that its existence was challenged by a Tory Minister! Was this Monarchical right a doctrine recognised by the Whig Revolution of 1688, a revolution which detected a divine right not in the king, but in the people? Finally, his conduct in regard to the French Revolution is admitted, even by his strongest partisans, to have been characterised by a reckless disregard of the peculiar duties and responsibilities that his office imposed on him. We do not mean to question his sincerity. There is abundant evidence to the contrary in the letters which Lord John Russell has published. But was it cautious or politic in a party leader? He must have known that the Revolution was an event hostile to the sentiments of the great body of the nation, and repugnant to the opinions of the most important members of his own party. There was no necessity, to say the least, why he should have assumed the uncompromising position he thought fit to maintain, or voluntarily united himself with those who were regarded with suspicion and dislike by the most powerful classes of English society. Of all his political blunders, none were freighted with more

malignant consequences to himself and his party than this; for it thoroughly thinned the ranks and weakened the influence of the Liberal Opposition during half a century.

The first act of the Revolution was consummated in 1789; but it was not until the 6th of May 1792, that the schism in the Opposition became publicly known. The Revolution absolutely exasperated Burke. He took it in the light of a personal insult. There was unquestionably tinge of insanity in the angry vehemence with which he assailed it. During the last session, upon this very subject, bitter recriminations had passed between him and Sheridan, which might have been spared, "if only for the ghost of a departed friendship." And a yet earlier and dearer fellowship was now to be sacrificed. Fox had risen during the evening, had denounced the enemies of liberty, and lauded in eloquent words the regenerated society of France. Burke found it impossible to remain silent any longer. He was, he said, no friend to tyranny. He hated tyranny, but he hated it most where most were concerned; for he knew that the tyranny of a multitude was a multiplied tyranny. Nor was he an enemy to liberty; but the liberty that he loved was a liberty associated with order and honesty, that not only existed along with virtue and justice, but that could not exist without them. This was not the liberty that had been asserted by the French Republicans; on the contrary, they had been urged on by a ferocious indocility, that seemed to have destroyed their social nature, and made them

little better than the brutes. Before Burke had finished his harangue, Fox expressed a confident hope that though they might differ upon public affairs, there would be no loss of private friendship. But Burke publicly refused the proffered amnesty. There was something, he declared, so malignant in this detested constitution, that it seemed to envenom everything that it touched, and he knew that in doing his duty he had lost his friend. When he resumed his seat Fox rose to speak, but for some time was too much agitated to address the House; then, in a burst of passionate tenderness, he appealed to his revered and venerated friend—to the memory of their old affection—to the remembrance of their inalienable friendship! But Burke was inexorable. He would hold no communion with any one who sympathised with France. Her friends should be his enemies, and her enemies should be his friends. And, henceforth, the old comrades were parted by a gulf " more bitter than the bitterness of death."

Thus the result of Fox's leadership was to extinguish the Whig, as the leading power in the State, for well nigh fifty years. From 1784 until the era of the Reform Bill the party was politically extinct. No doubt unlucky accidents did occur, whose evil consequences the severest prudence could not entirely have obviated; but the Whigs were banished from office because Fox, alike as a man and as a politician, had failed to conciliate the confidence of the people. As a man he was pronounced profligate; as a politician unsafe; and neither magnanimity nor eloquence could

retrieve the position which want of character had forfeited.

Pitt, in either respect, stands out in striking contrast to his rival.

His domestic life was blameless. The tone of his mind was singularly pure and elevated. Like the Arthur of romance, William Pitt was "a blameless gentleman." Nor was his purity, as his enemies asserted, exclusively due to the reserve and coldness of his temperament. It is said that he was at one time deeply attached to Lady Eleanor Eden, and that the conviction that the ties of domestic life were inconsistent with the engrossing claims of public duty alone prevented him from making her his wife—a sacrifice dictated by a keen sense of duty, perhaps, but still in many respects to be lamented. Lady Eleanor's noble beauty, and fine and thoughtful brow, would have associated, not unfitly, with the austere memory of the incorruptible statesman. Such a union, too, would probably have proved beneficial to Pitt himself. His integrity was somewhat icy. There was a certain hardness in his character which this union might have relieved. But when he had once decided he never relented.* And so his life went on, cast in the same mould, till its close,—cold, simple, incorruptible, wanting in the finer lights and subtler perceptions of the affections, but fasci-

^{*} Pitt had few friends or intimates. Dundas, and subsequently Canning, were the only men he thoroughly trusted. Even his own Chancellor intrigued against him. Thurlow, indeed, with ponderous hypocrisy denied the charge—"When I forget my King, may God forget me!" "He'll see you d—d first!" retorted Wilkes. "The best thing that can happen to you," said Burke.

nating by its grand, imposing, and sombre masses. The last scene—the dead minister lying alone and unwatched in the deserted house—is very sad, but not out of keeping with the rest of the incidents, and with the cheerless burden of ambition he had voluntarily undertaken to bear.*

Pitt's public no less than his private career compelled confidence. He undoubtedly enjoyed many natural advantages. The House of Commons could not behold unmoved the son of the Great Commoner. A noble opportunity, moreover, opened to him on the very threshold of his parliamentary career; but even his enemies admitted that he turned it to account with infinite skill and tact. It needed indeed marvellous nerve and moral hardihood to enter deliberately into a life and death conflict with the turbulent and despotic Commons of England. Had he then fallen he would have fallen irretrievably; but he never faltered, never wavered, never laid aside his arms, until the enemy was routed and victory won.

The conflict between the youthful Premier, and the combined opposition of North and Fox, is one of the most bitter recorded in the annals of parliamentary warfare. That Pitt asserted the doctrine of the Constitution cannot now be questioned. That the ministers of the Crown are entitled to appeal to the constituencies against the

^{*} Earl Stanhope in his recent Life of Pitt has published a selection of letters from Pitt to his mother—in which kindliness of heart, and a solicitude about trifles that concerned her happiness, are manifested, and which somewhat soften the harder lines in the picture.

verdict of an adverse Parliament, has been admitted and enforced by Lord John Russell himself.* in 1784 the Opposition, secure in the support of a majority of the House of Commons, determined to guard against a dissolution, and in the attempt did not hesitate to employ the most violent and arbitrary expedients. To withstand this powerful and unscrupulous confederacy must have required, as we have said, a force of moral courage with which few men are gifted. Against the minister were arrayed the genius and the authority of the most accomplished statesmen, the parliamentary influence of Lord North, and the philosophical sagacity of Edmund Burke, Fox's vehement invective, and Sheridan's bitter pleasantry, which, as old Robert Boyle found the toothache, "though it be not mortal, is very troublesome." The ministers were at one time denounced as a set of desperate miscreants, who persisted in holding office against the confidence of the Commons; at another ridiculed as arrogant young gentlemen, who required to be taught that Government was too serious a business to be made the toy of the school-room. The Premier was

The Virgin Minister—the Heaven-born youth;

and the charge of precocious and profligate ambition was hurled against the "new Octavius." But Pitt's courageous pertinacity proved equal to the crisis. Animated especially by the resolute support of the King and the Duke of Richmond, he

^{*} Life and Times of Charles James Fex. Vol. ii. p. 56. London: 1859.

continued to maintain his difficult position with a proud humility, that is not without its charm. the arguments of the Opposition he replied in skilful and eloquent speeches, which displayed profound acquaintance with constitutional law, and the history and practice of Parlia-Its taunts and its reproaches treated with haughty silence, and that superb contempt, which is described by those who knew him as a marked feature in his character. When the contest had lasted for nearly four months, when the Government had undergone a succession of ignominious defeats, when invective and argument had been alike exhausted, the majority was at length forced to admit that the House of Commons had been discomfited in a desperate conflict by a Minister not five-and-twenty! "In all my researches in modern and ancient times," is the testimony of the great English historian of Rome, "I have nowhere met with his parallel, who, at so early a period of his life, discharged so important a trust, with so much credit to himself and with so much advantage to his country."

When Pitt had succeeded in defeating the coalition, his task had scarcely more than begun. He had still to give his party a bond of cohesion and a principle of union. He had to detect the exact place it was necessary to occupy between the rival political sections on the one hand, and the mass of the people on the other. He had to inaugurate, and work out, a policy which would keep the nation with him. That he did so must ever, we think, be regarded as his peculiar triumph.

The material of a party, as we have seen, lay ready to his hand; but in itself it certainly was not very promising. It was chiefly composed of the old Tory connection, which had acquired a renovated influence through the vices and blunders of its But there was no vitality in its creed; it had retained the dry form, while it had lost the religious energy, of its early convictions. Toryism of Divine right and passive obedience had manifestly answered the end it was meant to serve, and now it seemed that the sooner it was dismissed the better. But the claims of its rival were equally loose and unsatisfactory. The lofty and abstract patriotism of the Whig had practically ministered only to the selfishness of the nobility. The liberty he desired was the liberty of the oligarchy to govern England, not the liberty of the people to govern themselves. His aristocratic leaders were utterly ignorant of the popular sympathies and of the popular necessities. It was with these sympathies and these necessities that, at the close of the coalition contest, Pitt identified Toryism. Feudal England had become the England of mercantile and mechanical enterprise, and under the direction of "the infant Atlas of the State," Conservatism ceased to be a feudal, and became a commercial, principle. Granting the people the only freedom they really cared for at the time—the freedom to create and accumulate capital—he relieved the springs of national industry, and augmented the sources of national wealth. He was the first Minister of the Crown who recognised that the philosophical genius of Adam Smith

"furnished the best solution to every question connected with the history of commerce, and with the systems of political economy." He was the first Chancellor of the Exchequer who brought with him to office the principles of a scientific finance. When he came into power the income of the country, after the prolonged drain of the American war, did not supply the means of supporting even a moderate peace establishment. Within a single year his tariff—a tariff constructed upon the principle that has directed all our recent legislation, the increase of the revenue through an increase in the consumption, rather than through an increase in the taxation—produced a magnifi-But while he profited England, he cent surplus. saved Conservatism. Constructing his policy on wise and liberal principles, he incorporated with a worn-out creed a new and vital element of strength. and imparted to a powerless and unimaginative party the force and the refinement of genius. the popular interests of a mercantile community, and in the maxims of an enlightened finance, he sought for it a more permanent pre-eminence than could be derived from the wealth of an aristocratic connection, or the influence of a shattered tradition. More than once, even within our own memory, has Toryism been in this way rescued by a subtle, profound, and prolific intellect; and if even now it can with truth be said to exert any perceptible influence upon our practical politics, it is because it has been thus redeemed from its mercenary instincts, and its more literal associations.

The first ten years of Pitt's administration

present a marked contrast to those which succeeded. His genius and his sympathies were pacific; he was fitted to make a great peace Minister; but he was forced to become the Minister of war. "Forced," we say, because there can be no doubt that he regarded war with dislike, and that those who attribute to his ambition the participation of England in the revolutionary war speak without a knowledge of the facts. He struggled earnestly to keep the country aloof, and he refused to join "the coalesced kings" in their ill-advised attempt to regulate the internal organization of France. That question, he always declared was one which the French people alone were competent to decide. "If," said Canning in 1794, describing and vindicating the policy of the Ministry, "it had been a harmless, idiot lunacy, which had contented itself with playing its tricks and practising its fooleries at home, with dressing up strumpets in oak-leaves and inventing nick-names for the calendar, I should have been far from desiring to interrupt their innocent amusements; we might have looked on with hearty contempt indeed, but with a contempt not wholly unmixed with commiseration." It was not until Dumouriez had made the Ardennes forest "the Thermopylæ of France;" it was not until the war on the part of the Convention had ceased to be a war of defence, and become a war of agression and propagandism; it was not until the King had been put to death, that Pitt came to see that neutrality could no longer be preserved. It was not Pitt, it was the French and the English people, who made war inevitable. When the Convention,

on the 19th of November 1792, decreed that it would assist with arms all nations who wished to recover their liberty, it virtually declared war against the constituted Governments of Europe. But England was by no means unwilling to parti-"The coalesced kings cipate in the contest. threaten us," shouted Danton, "and we cast at their feet, as our gage of battle, the head of a king." The English people eagerly accepted the challenge. The atrocities of the revolution had horrified them; its successes had scared them; and, horror-stricken and panic-stricken, they threw themselves blindly into the battle, and dragged the Minister along with them. The Revolutionary War has been called a war of principle; it was rather, in so far as England was involved, a war of sentiment and passion. The moral sense of the country had been outraged by the indecent and ferocious excesses of the Republic, and it protested accordingly, and in the aggressive shape an Englishman's moral protest generally takes.

The war was indeed protracted and disastrous; before it was finished Fox and Pitt were in their graves, and a new generation had arisen. But to attribute these disasters to the policy of the Minister is surely most unjust. The fate of battles was against him; the genius of Napoleon was against him; but he did his part with a lavish hand and a stout heart. He did not starve the war; he did not practise any of the small economies that are now so much in vogue; he addressed the undivided energies of the country to the conflict, and strained them to the utmost. Chatham

himself could not have conducted a war with more magnificent prodigality; and it can at least be said that, from first to last, England remained Mistress of the Sea.

The Opposition alleged that after he had once embarked in the war, Pitt would never listen to any overture for peace; but the charge, though no doubt to some extent correct, can hardly be made matter of reproach to the Minister. accurately estimated the malign nature of the con-He was opposed to a great Captain, for whose safety war was as needful as "the encasing Napoleon's power rested upon a military basis; and such a power was in its very nature a perpetual menace to Europe. To make peace with this foe was, as Pitt felt, virtually impracticable. A truce was more unsafe than a war, even though the war might be burdensome and The Opposition thundered against the disastrous. bloody and ambitious Minister; but when the Opposition itself succeeded to power, it was forced to acknowledge that Pitt was right, and that, so long as Napoleon and the French army lay like a thundercloud over Europe, it was impossible to patch up even a provisional peace.

Such were the two men who for twenty eventful years divided the admiration of the House of Commons—who still on either hand salute the stranger as, with uncovered head, he enters the temple of the State. Pitt—the superb Commoner, who has refused the blue ribbon, and will never accept of any reward for his great services, either from his king or his country—from child-

hood superior to pleasure, temperate, abstemious, and with a reputation for unblemished integrity fluent, clear, correct, and commanding as an orator -with arguments that appeal rather to the reason than to the imagination—severely just and coldly inflexible—we recognise in him a great Constitutional Minister, a haughty defender of the ancient order, a fitting representative of the most august and powerful Monarchy in Europe! Fox, on the other hand, with the light-heartedness of a boy-passionately enamoured of life-loving pleasure intensely, and quitting it with difficulty and regret—wanting, indeed, in the patient courage, foresight, and energy of the disciplined intellect, but wielding with matchless skill a burning eloquence, searchingly argumentative even when most impetuous—to us he recalls the simple and courageous tribune of a degraded populace—the old orator, who could weep for very shame that they will not be stirred, as high above the crowd he thunders against the insolent dictator, and casts down his fiery words, like hail-stones, upon the upturned faces of the people!

The lines of opposition between the two statesmen are for the most part strongly marked; but at length, as the end approaches, as the curtain drops, they approximate and unite. The life-long rivals are reconciled. Each is exhausted with the conflict; the fire burns low; "the wine of life is on the lees." The principles to which they had clung are worn out by their vehement advocacy. One after the other the positions they had successively taken up have been abandoned. They had

espoused opinions wide as the poles asunder; and now it has come to this—they are at one. They were strong men both; but events had proved too strong for either.

They spent their lives together, and in death they were not divided. Pitt died—"of old age"—at forty-six; a few months elapsed, and Fox was laid by his side. The noble lament in *Marmion* was uttered over the tomb where rest the ashes of both the rivals.

Now is the stately column broke, The beacon-light is quenched in smoke, The trumpet's silver sound is still, The warder silent on the hill!

Pitt's mantle fell upon Canning. Canning was his pupil and his heir. "To one man, while he lived, I was devoted with all my heart, and all my soul. Since the death of Mr. Pitt, I acknowledge no leader; my political allegiance lies buried in his grave."*

- * Mr. Canning's speech at Liverpool on the occasion of his contest with Mr. Brougham: Mr. Brougham retorted in a powerful passage of eloquent invective:—
- "Gentlemen, I stand up in this contest against the friends and followers of Mr. Pitt, or, as they partially designate him, the immortal statesman, now no more. Immortal in the miseries of his devoted country! Immortal in the wounds of her bleeding liberties! Immortal in the cruel wars which sprang from his cold, miscalculating ambition! Immortal in the intolerable taxes, the countless loads of debt which these wars have flung upon us—which the youngest man amongst us will not live to see the end of! Immortal in the triumphs of our enemies, and the ruin of our allies—the costly purchase of so much blood and treasure! Immortal in the afflictions of England, and the humiliation of her friends, through the whole results of his twenty years' reign, from the first rays of favour with which a delighted court gilded his early apostacy, to the deadly glare

In very early life Canning had given indications of high talent, and of the qualities of mind which afterwards distinguished him. Even in the Microcosm of his Eton days he displayed, along with much literary cleverness, a tact, moderation of judgment, and fastidiousness of taste, which are - seldom met with at that immature period of life. The Anti-Jacobin confirmed his literary reputation. His contributions to its columns will live with the language. They are very slight, but their classic polish and finish, their refined, subtle, and stealthy irony, their perfect mimetic grace, secure them a high place among the exquisite trifles of art which inherit immortality. Most of his impromptus have disappeared with the society on which they floated; but the few that remain are sufficient to indicate the skill and felicity with which he spoke and thought. What can be more perfect in their way than his pleasantries on Mr. Whitbread? Here is one of them—less known

which is at this instant cast upon his name by the burning metropolis of our last ally! But may no such immortality ever fall to my lot—let me rather live innocent and inglorious: and when at last I cease to serve you, and to feel for your wrongs, may I have a humble monument in some nameless stone, to tell that beneath it there rests from his labours in your service, 'an enemy of the immortal statesman—a friend of peace and of the people.'"

Lord Brougham has criticised Mr. Canning; Mr. Stapleton tells us Mr. Canning's opinion of Mr. Brougham. "I recollect one day, when riding on the grounds near Brighton, telling him that I had received a letter from London, stating that Mr. Brougham was dangerously ill. 'Poor fellow,' said Mr. Canning, 'I am very sorry to hear it;' and then after a minute's pause he added, 'If he should be taken from the House of Commons, there will be no one left to pound and mash.'"

than his Anti-Jacobin sallies, and therefore justifying reproduction:—

FRAGMENT OF AN ORATION.

Part of Mr. Whithread's speech on the trial of Lord Melville, put into verse by Mr. Canning, at the time it was delivered:—

I'm like Archimedes for science and skill, I'm like a young prince going straight up a hill; I'm like (with respect to the fair be it said), I'm like a young lady just bringing to bed. If you ask why the eleventh of June I remember, Much better than April, or May, or November, On that day, my lords, with truth I assure ye, My sainted progenitor set up his brewery; On that day, in the morning, he began brewing beer; On that day too commenced his connubial career: On that day he received and he issued his bills; On that day he cleared out all the cash from his tills; On that day he died, having finished his summing, And the Angels all cried, "Here's old Whitbread a-coming!" So that day still I hail with a smile and a sigh For his beer with an E, and his bier with an I; And still on that day, in the hottest of weather, The whole Whitbread family dine all together. So long as the beams of this house shall support The roof which o'ershades this respectable court, Where Hastings was tried for oppressing the Hindoos; So long as the sun shall shine in at those windows, My name shall shine bright as my ancestor's shines, Mine recorded in journals, his blazoned on signs!

Canning's early associations were with the Whig party. At the house of his uncle, Mr. Stratford Canning, he became acquainted with its most eminent members. The beautiful and vivacious Mrs. Crew, who, with the Duchess of Devonshire, adorned and inspired the Whig society of the metropolis, was one of his personal friends. Before he had left Oxford, he was looked upon as

"one of themselves," and Sheridan, on the occasion of Mr. Jenkinson's first speech, announced his coming to the House of Commons. When, therefore, he entered Parliament as a supporter of the Minister, the resentment and mortification of the connection were angrily manifested. He was called a traitor and an apostate, a Judas, who for the loaves and fishes had sold his faith. many years, whenever he rose to speak, Grey and Tierney left the House. Such conduct was absurd. To make a boy responsible for the immature opinions which family tradition, or youthful vanity, may lead him to adopt, is ridiculous and offensive. Nor is there any proof that Canning had expressed the sentiments imputed to He originally sympathised with the French reformers, but their excesses quickly alienated his moderate temper and his refined tastes, and the commanding genius of Pitt at an early period attracted his admiration. "Were I in Parliament," he writes to one of his Oxford friends-" where I sometime hence hope to be-my support and opinion would go with Mr. Pitt."

In 1793 he entered the House of Commons! and in the following session made his first speech, which was subdued but effective. The narrative of his feelings on this occasion is very graphic:—
"I intended to have told you, at full length, what were my feelings at getting up, and being pointed at by the Speaker, and hearing my name called from all sides of the House; how I trembled lest I should hesitate, or misplace a word in the two or three first sentences; while all was dead silence

around me, and my own voice sounded to my ears quite like some other gentleman's; how, in about ten minutes or less, I got warmed in collision with Fox's arguments, and did not even care twopence for anybody or anything; how I was roused, in about half an hour, from this pleasing state of selfsufficiency, by accidentally casting my eyes towards the Opposition bench, for the purpose of paying compliments to Fox, and assuring him of my respect and admiration, and there seeing certain members of Opposition laughing (as I thought), and quizzing me; how this accident abashed me, and, together with my being out of breath, rendered me incapable of uttering; how those who sat below me on the Treasury bench, seeing what it was that distressed me, cheered loudly, and the House joined them; and how, in less than a minute, straining every nerve in my body, and plucking up every bit of resolution in my heart, I went on more boldly than ever, and getting into a part of my subject that I liked, and, having the House with me, got happily and triumphantly to the end."

Canning had almost every quality fitted to make him a favourite with the House of Commons. His manner was always indeed somewhat haughty and authoritative; he was an unsparing antagonist; he exhausted himself at all times—these are his own words—" in endeavours to give vigour and sharpness to political hostility." The Whigs, moreover, as we have seen, regarded him at first with bitter aversion; but they constituted at that time a small minority in the House, and their

influence was not sufficient to make their hostility very prejudicial to its object.

Canning's presence was singularly graceful. His figure was slight and wiry; his features, finely cut and decisive, were at the same time very mobile, and capable of a subtle play and variety of expression,—a union seldom met with. "There is a lighting up of his features, and a comic play about the mouth," Wilberforce said, "when the full force of the approaching witticism strikes his own mind, which prepares you for the burst which is to follow." His head, altogether, was one of great intellectual power and beauty; the kind of head that is more frequently found on Greek statues than on English members of Parliament. His voice was low, but so rich, and clear, and perfectly modulated, that it was heard distinctly in every part of the House. There was an air of high-breeding and aristocratic culture in every gesture, which those who dubbed him an "adventurer" did not always possess.

His eloquence was calm, serene, and luminous. He was seldom passionate; rarely yielded to excitement or emotion; but when he did the effect was electrical. The vehemence struck all the more keenly, from the contrast it presented to his passionless demeanour, his sarcastic temper, and his habitual reserve. With the lighter artillery of parliamentary defence and attack he was completely furnished. His irony was swift and stealthy,—it stabbed like the stiletto. "I can excuse him," he said, when Mr. Windham's military measures were supported by his colleagues

on grounds which he himself had repudiated, "for having disdained to answer the attacks of his opponents, but I am surprised that he should not have vindicated himself from the support of his friends." He particularly excelled in that refined pleasantry—that indirect and gentlemanly quizzing—which is so much relished by the House of Commons. The heavy Falmouth coach "conveying the succour of Lord Nugent's person to Spain"—the Government discovering that there really was something like a war between France and Prussia, "by the trifling circumstance that the Prussian army was annihilated"—the account of Mr. Windham's expeditions*—are capital specimens of this vein of grave and good-humoured banter.

Mr. Stapleton gives some very interesting details of the manner in which he prepared for a great speech. "His whole mind was absorbed in it for two or perhaps three days beforehand. He spared no labour in obtaining and in arranging his materials. He always drew up a paper (which he used in the House) with the heads, in their order, of the several topics on which he meant to touch, and these heads were numbered, and the numbers sometimes extended to four or even five hundred." Some of these "headings" have been preserved, and they are very curious. We have only room for one—the unused notes of a speech in reply to Mr. Hobhouse, who, Mr. Canning believed, had, in

^{* &}quot;A fire-work before Boulogne and—yet that wanted confirmation—an embarkation on the Paddington canal. But for the uncommon openness of the weather, it is probable that his army would have been frozen up at Uxbridge."

an anonymous pamphlet, suggested his assassination.

- 391. But in or out of office.
- 392. The Constitution is my object of worship.
- 393. And in this her temple.
- 394. For that obloquy.
- 395. For that demonstration.
- 396. For that designation, and I pretty well know by what pen, to the dagger of the assassin.
 - 397. But it is past—the danger and the scorn.
 - 398. Let them rail, or let them repent.
 - 399. My course is the same.
- 400. And while I have the strength, I desire no other duty than that of doing my best in defence of a form of Government which, if destroyed, could not be replaced, and which may yet afford shelter and glory to generations who will know how to value and preserve it.

Not only were these external characteristics in his favour; the temper of his mind was peculiarly fitted to win the confidence of the House of Com-He was brave, intrepid, and honourable; no stain of baseness ever soiled his reputation. To such an one an assembly of English gentlemen can forgive much. And the moderation of his character attuned with their own. This moderation was intimately allied with his fastidiousness. His severe and dainty taste, the extreme care with which he lingered over the structure of a sentence, or the exact etymological significance of a word sometimes, perhaps, degenerated into prudery. He scanned a royal speech till the faintest tinge of colour was bleached out of it. The King's message upon the affairs of Portugal was discovered at the eleventh hour to contain a slight grammatical

error: Mr. Canning would not present it to the House until the inaccuracy had been carefully Some people may be disposed to resent this jealous attention to verbal niceties; we are not. Mental slovenliness is as obnoxious as bodily; and scrupulous neatness, both in dress and language, is a virtue of the first magnitude. Confusion in speech is commonly the index of confused thinking; and the philosopher and the statesman should weigh the precise import of words as rigorously as the lawyer. A man so constitutionally fastidious as Canning was, could not help being temperate. He had a horror of excess in every shape; whatever shocked good taste was repugnant to him; the extravagances of enthusiasm were regarded with critical dislike by his fair and unimpassioned intellect. A shade of meditative irony runs perhaps through his mind; but he had no very deep convictions, nor the stuff of which bigots and martyrs are made. Yet, with all his Epicurean delicacy and meteor-like brilliancy, he possessed a remarkably sound understanding, and a rare fund His great speech upon the of common sense. bullion question shewed the most perfect acquaintance with the intricacies of practical finance. "He played," says Horner, "with its most knotty subtleties."

This moderation was the key-note of Canning's character, and determined his political career. He was liberal and yet a Tory, the adversary of Reform, and yet the ardent advocate of toleration. Wherever a tangible grievance existed, he devoted his energies to its redress; but he opposed every

scheme of theoretical amelioration. He was the life-long advocate of Catholic emancipation: he was the life-long opponent of constitutional change. During the time he was in office, the question of Greek independence arose. The attitude he assumed towards it strikingly illustrates the habitual temperance of his disposition. When all Europe had gone crazy about the "degenerate offspring of the free," Canning maintained the even tenor of his He was a fine scholar, and was not insensible to the classical associations which the struggle evoked; but he would not allow his imagination to take his judgment captive, or divert him from prudent and temperate counsels; and he expressed the keenest contempt for those who, to reconstruct the baseless fabric of a vision, blindly perilled the practical well-being of Europe. "I have traced Chateaubriand's agents," he writes, scornfully, "perplexing the unhappy Greeks with I know not what absurd fancies of elective monarchies, and crusades against the infidel, with new knighthoods of Malta, at three shillings and sixpence a head." He himself tried to accommodate the dispute between the Greeks and their Mussulman masters by a reasonable compromise. He negotiated a treaty which provided that, on the payment of a moderate fixed duty to the Porte, the Turkish army should be removed from Greece. But this wise and politic middle course was of course unacceptable to the imaginative politicians who, except the Republic were restored in its antique integrity, were content to abet the ambitious designs of Russia.

On his foreign policy the fame of Mr. Canning

must ultimately depend. He was the ablest foreign minister that England has had for a century. The principles on which his policy rested were admirably conceived, and most skilfully executed. From the beginning to the end of his career they are evolved with dramatic consistency.

We must briefly justify this assertion.

Canning entered heart and soul into Mr. Pitt's contest with France. He held that the conflict was unavoidable, and that it had been forced upon a minister "whose fame as well as power rested upon the basis of the financial prosperity of the country." The indecent excesses of the French Republicans, moreover, shocked his taste; and when the Republic was at length destroyed by one of its own offspring, he bursts into an Io pæan of triumph. "Huzza! huzza!" (he exclaims, in 1799) "Buonaparte, an apostate from the cause of liberty—Buonaparte, the avowed tyrant of his country, is an object to be contemplated with enthusiasm—to be held up to the admiration and gratitude of mankind. Tell me not that he will make France more powerful—that he will make war with more vigour, or peace with more dexterity, than the exploded Directory have done; I care not. No! no! It is the thorough destruction of the principles of exaggerated liberty—it is the lasting ridicule thrown upon all systems of democratic equality—it is this that makes the name of Buonaparte dear to me—this his one act has done, let him conduct himself as he may hereafter; let him be a general, or a legislator, or a monarch, or a captive, crowned

or beheaded, it is all the same for this purpose. Buonaparte may flourish, but the idol of Jacobinism is no more." Like Pitt, he did not believe in the possibility of peace. The conflict, he held, was unappeasable until its cause was removed. The military despotism of Napoleon was a volcanic power which, even when at rest, perpetually threatened the tranquillity of Europe. The peace of Amiens—"the never, never to be excused or atoned for, this most disgraceful and calamitious treaty of peace"—he bitterly condemned. "I would never have signed it," he wrote; "I would have cut off my right hand rather."

Both the great leaders of the great English parties died in 1806—Fox with his last breath urging the vigorous prosecution of the war he had so often denounced; and towards the close of that year the Portland Administration was formed, in which, for the first time, Canning occupied the post of Foreign Secretary.

The times were times of peril and disaster. Napoleon was at the climax of his power. The whole Continent lay at his feet, and the Imperial dictator had remodelled the map of Europe. The only Government, except the English, which had hitherto opposed an obstinate resistance to his ambition had at length succumbed; and the French and Russian autocrats were now, to all appearance, firmly united. England alone remained, and the secret article of the Treaty of Tilsit—by which Napoleon and Alexander agreed that the fleets of the neutral Powers should be taken possession of by them—aimed a blow at

her naval supremacy which, had it taken effect, would have irretrievably crippled her resources. Fortunately the ambitious intrigue was disclosed to the English Government. The situation was one of instant peril. Whatever was to be done must be done at once. Mr. Canning did not hesitate. The Danish fleet was the object of the confederates; an English force was instantly despatched to Copenhagen, the fleet was captured, and conveyed to Portsmouth.

This was a daring blow; one which a fearless and audacious genius alone could have dictated; one, therefore, which the timid and the sanctimonious have not been slow to condemn. sermons have been preached upon the violation of the law of nations which it involved; ponderous speeches have denounced the man who sanctioned this profligate attack upon a friendly, or at least, a neutral Power. The world has declined to indorse these vapid platitudes and weak senti-Emergencies unquestionably arise, mentalisms. alike in the life of men and of nations, for the solution of which the ordinary rules of moral judgment do not serve. The conduct of the men who have to encounter these crises must be estimated by another standard, and by a different code. That code has justified Mr. Canning. It is possible to kill without being guilty of murder; it is possible to rob without being a thief; and a man may break the law of nations without becoming a buccaneer. The great man sees through the thin sophistries and fictions which society has erected for its protection. The Danish fleet was

the property of the Danish government, with whom we were at peace; but it was practically in the possession of the Allies, with whom we were at war. If it was not used by us, it would certainly be used against us. Strength imposes certain obligations; but so does weakness; and if a feeble Government neglect to observe these obligations, it must take the consequences. Denmark was unable to resist the coercion of the Continental powers; and if she chose to retain a weapon of offence which she could not herself use, but which could be used by others, we were, for our own protection, entitled to take it out of her hands. England was in great and imminent peril; to the supreme moral fearlessness of Mr. Canning we owe, in no small measure, her deliverance.

The effect of the blow was great. "stunned" the Russian autocrat into his senses. The French Emperor was exasperated beyond "Since the death of Paul," measure. Fouché, "I never saw Napoleon abandon himself to such violent transports of passion." While the issue hung in the balance, Canning remained in a state of keen anxiety. "It is a most wearying suspense," he writes in one letter. In another— "Nothing yet. It is very extraordinary; and very, very anxious." At length, after an interval of intense disquietude, the news of complete victory arrived. The Foreign Secretary had effectually deranged the aggressive policy of Tilsit.

Canning felt keenly that either England or the Emperor must go down; and so, disregarding all

subordinate friendships and enmities, he bent the whole force of his mind to defeat the ambition of Napoleon, and deliver Europe from the incubus which smothered her. "It is evident his head is turned; it is for us to cure the vertigo;" "Whoever is the enemy of Napoleon is the friend of England;" were the mottoes of his policy. The capture of the Danish fleet had saved England; the revolt of the Spanish people saved Europe. The whole significance of that outburst was immediately apprehended by Canning. "A nation like that," he said, " may be exterminated, but cannot be subdued;" and he confidently backed the sluggish and tenacious patriotism of the Spaniard against the rapid sweep and brilliant genius of the Corsican. Money and troops were forwarded to the Peninsula; and Sir Arthur Wellesley, whose pre-eminent military capacity Canning was among the first to recognise, was despatched to take the command. No disasters could shake the Minister's "While Cadiz is safe, Spain is not confidence. lost; and while all is not lost, all is ultimately retrievable." A noble confidence nobly redeemed.

But though Canning organized the policy which ultimately proved fatal to the Empire, he did not remain to complete it. After his unlucky duel with Lord Castlereagh he resigned the Foreign Secretaryship, and did not, until 1822, again hold the office. The interregnum was unfortunate, alike for his own fame and for England. For himself, because the years between were years crowded with brilliant military achievements, and important diplomatic transactions, which would have crowned

the Minister's reputation. For England, because, on his retirement, Castlereagh assumed the conduct of our foreign relations. Had Canning remained in office, we may rest assured that he would not have sanctioned the settlement of 1815. Had he remained in office the "Holy Alliance" would have been nipped in the bud, and the struggle we have lately witnessed—a struggle to readjust on a better defined and more natural basis the distribution of power in Europe—might have been averted.

On Lord Castlereagh's death Canning returned to the Foreign Office. Great changes had taken place since he quitted it. "The mighty deluge by which the Continent was overwhelmed had subsided; the limits of nations were again visible, and the spires and turrets of ancient establishments had reappeared above the subsiding wave." But a new peril now threatened Europe. Three of the Allied Sovereigns had been frightened out of their wits by the monstrous progeny of the Revolution, and they entered at Paris into an offensive and defensive alliance. The programme of the "Holy Alliance" was suspiciously vague and fantastic, but its real motives were quickly penetrated. Its authors elected themselves the constitutional police of Europe. Whenever a popular insurrection against a tyrannical ruler broke out, whenever a free government was demanded, whenever a liberal institution was established, the Alliance was up and doing. and similar movements were pregnant with danger to the peace of the world; and it was the duty of the constitutional police to secure order and to preserve tranquillity. Such was the specious scheme which "the craft of the Bohemian," "the ferocity of the Tartar," and "the obstinacy of the Vandal," had devised, and which for many years arrested the expression of independent thought, and national life, over the continent of Europe.

Castlereagh had tacitly acquiesced in the policy of the Alliance. The prestige and authority of the ancient monarchies represented in the association, had produced their natural effect upon a mind obstinately hostile to liberal institutions. But to Canning the Alliance was utterly repugnant—repugnant to his English feelings, and to his liberal inclinations. Gradually, imperceptibly, with fine skill, he detached England from the connection. thwarted its policy, he ridiculed its anger, he defied its threats. He won, but it was a hard fight. King was against him; the Duke of Wellington was against him. Metternich, the great champion of legitimacy, employed all his vast influence, and all the arts of courtly intrigue, to procure the Foreign Secretary's dismissal, and raised in Canning's breast a feeling of bitter but contemptuous suspicion. "I am quite clear," he says to Lord Liverpool, "that there is no honesty in Metternich, and that we cannot enter into joint concert with him without a certainty of being It is not only his practice, but in our case it will be his pride and pleasure."

^{*} The complimentary epithets used by Mr. Brougham to describe the members of the Alliance—the King of Prussia, and the Emperors of Austria and Russia.

writing to Lord Granville, he expresses his opinion in even stronger language. "You ask me what you shall say to Metternich. In the first place you shall hear what I think of him—that he is the greatest rogue and liar on the Continent, perhaps in the civilized world." But Canning's perseverance, caution, and will triumphed over every obstacle, and the foreign policy of England has ever since retained the impress of the principles he then stamped upon it

During the years between 1822 and 1827—when he held the seals of the Foreign Office—he withdrew the English plenipotentiary from the Congress of Verona, he recognised the independence of the Spanish colonies, and he despatched a force to the Tagus to aid the Portuguese. Each of these acts was intended to disengage England from the Alliance, and to manifest how radically we were opposed to the principles it promulgated.

The Congress of Verona sanctioned the occupation of Spain by France. Spain had tried the experiment of liberal institutions, and the Alliance naturally resented the experiment. So the French King was deputed to bring his refractory neighbour back to reason, and to right ways of thinking and governing. When, however, this resolution was arrived at, the Duke of Wellington, who represented England in the Congress, protested and withdrew. Canning was satisfied with a dignified protest; we were not bound by any specific treaties to assist Spain; and until a question of national faith, or national honour, should arise, he was resolved that England should neither originate nor

participate in a war, the limits of which, as he said, no mortal sagacity could determine.

The French occupation was no doubt keenly resented by the Foreign Secretary; and, though he did not allow his feelings to hurry him into war, he speedily and effectually retaliated. In the following year England recognised the independence of the Spanish American colonies.

Mr. Canning eagerly pressed the recognition. Various motives impelled him to do so. By recognising the independence of the colonies he disavowed in the face of the world the principles of the Alliance; and he deprived France of the moral weight which it might otherwise have derived from the possession of the Spanish kingdom.

It was obviously a heavy blow and great discouragement to the Alliance. The Alliance had been instituted to aid distressed kings in reducing refractory populations, and now, on the first opportunity, England proclaimed, not merely that the populations were entitled to please themselves, but that she would officially recognise any institution, Monarchical or Republican, under which they Moreover, the recognition prevented chose to live. France from reaping any disproportionate influence from the possession of Spain. France might keep Spain if she liked, but at least it should not be "Spain with the Indies." This was the argument Mr. Canning urged, and which, in his great speech on Portugal, he illustrated with surpassing eloquence. "I called the New World into existence to redress the balance of the Old!"

The argument appears simple and obvious, but it was attacked, shortly before Mr. Canning's death, with peculiar acrimony, by Earl Grey, who, with all the narrow sectarianism of the Whig aristocrat, disliked the "ambitious adventurer" under whose colours his party was then proud to serve. Mr. Canning intended to answer the speech, but the opportunity never came; and indeed, except in regard to one or two subordinate accusations, any answer would have been quite superfluous. The Earl asserted that the recognition of the colonies had not been made with the view of redressing the balance of power, by diminishing the influence of France. This was the gravamen of the charge,—the sting of the speech. It was ungenerously but distinctly insinuated that Canning's striking vindication of his American policy was an after-thought. The documents published by Mr. Stapleton completely refute the insinuation;** for they prove conclusively that the French occupation materially influenced the decision of the In the report, for instance, English Cabinet. which the Foreign Secretary submitted to the King on the subject, it is expressly stated that the argument had been already fully discussed. "That, consistently with the situation in which Spain is placed by the indefinite occupation of her strong places by the arms of a foreign Power, she cannot be considered as a free agent, and that of course Spain is essentially French in her foreign policy, it becomes our duty to prevent Spanish

^{*} George Canning and his Times, by Augustus Granville Stapleton, 1859.

America from being brought within the same subjection, are points which appear to your servants to be so conclusively argued in Lord Liverpool's paper, that it would be unpardonable to trouble your Majesty with any further discussion of them." So that the Foreign Secretary's eloquent vindication was no trick of artful rhetoric, no piece of idle bravado, but a literal and unembellished account of the fact.

All Mr. Canning's aticipations of the effects of the measure have not indeed been realized. "Spanish America is free," he exclaims, "and, if we do not mismanage our matters sadly, she is English, and

Novus sæclorum nascitur ordo."

Liberated America, alike to her own citizens and her allies, has proved rather a worthless possession, Its decay probably was too inveterate to admit under any circumstances of healthy re-organization; and Mr. Canning at least is not responsible for the failure of the experiment. "The responsibility rests not with me. Liberavi animam meam."

Mr. Canning's Portuguese policy was the corner-stone of the wise and sagacious system he inaugurated. It elicited, moreover, in the most marked manner, the enthusiasm of his contemporaries. The Emperor of Brazil, in resigning the Crown of Portugal, had accompanied his abdication with the grant of a constitutional charter. The much-suffering Alliance angrily protested; and as its protest remained unheeded, recurred to its old weapons. An army of Portuguese de-

serters, secretly organized and disciplined in Spain, were invited to invade their native country. Mr. Canning was prepared for the emergency. He had perceived at an early period that "Portugal was the ground on which the Holy Alliance meant to fight England," and he was ready to lift the glove. Portugal was our most ancient ally, and many treaties bound us to defend the integrity of her dominions. We had not interfered when Spain was occupied; but the time had come when the policy of non-intervention could no longer be persevered in, and when it was necessary to shew that, though moderate, we were not pusil-Hitherto we had diplomatically and lanimous. passively resisted the Alliance; now the faith of treaties, the dictates of national honour, and the principles of the independent policy we had adopted, demanded an active and armed interven-An English army was instantly despatched to the Tagus, where it was received "with frantic joy" by the population.

But the ovation which the army received from the people of Lisbon was equalled by that which awaited the Minister in the House of Commons. The King's Message respecting Portugal was taken into consideration on the 12th December 1826. Mr. Canning, in a most luminous and statesmanlike speech—"extraordinary and unprecedented in this house," was Mr. Brougham's testimony, "unprecedented (and I can give it no higher praise) even in the eloquence of the right honourable gentleman"—described the circumstances which rendered it, in the opinion of Minis-

ters, imperative that Portugal should not be left unaided. "We go to Portugal," he concluded, "not to rule, not to dictate, not to prescribe constitutions, but to preserve and defend the independence of an ally. We go to plant the standard of England on the well known heights of Lisbon. Where that standard is planted, foreign dominion shall not come."

The speech is a model of calm and elevated argument, tersely and vigorously expressed. Certain passages, that, for instance, in which he likens England to the ruler of the winds—

Celsa sedet Æolus arce
Sceptra tenens; mollitque animos, temperat ina;
Ni faciat, maria ac terras cælumque profundum,
Quippe ferant rapidi secum, verrantque per auras—

rise without embarrassment into a grave and thoughtful eloquence. The speech was vehemently applauded; but the great triumph was reserved for a later period of the evening. A feeble opposition had been threatened by Mr. Hume and one or two other members, and after a vigorous oration from Mr. Brougham, the Foreign Secretary rose to That reply is a masterpiece of argument reply. and eloquence; and to it alone, if need were, the vindication of the orator's fame might be left. The passage which explains the policy of the Government in not declaring war when Spain was occupied, is perhaps the most striking. The effects of the French occupation, the speaker said, had been infinitely exaggerated; but he did not blame these exaggerations, for he was aware that they were the echoes of sentiments which in the days

of William and of Anne—"the best times of our history"—animated the debates, and dictated the votes, of the British Parliament. But Spain was then a great maritime power, and she was no longer so. "It would be disingenuous, indeed," the speaker continued, "not to admit that the entry of the French army into Spain was in a certain sense a disparagement—an affront to the pride—a blow to the feelings of England; and it can hardly be supposed that on that occasion the Government did not sympathise with the feelings of the people. But I deny that, questionable or censurable as the act might be, it was one which necessarily called for our direct and hostile opposi-Was nothing, then, to be done? Was there no other mode of resistance, than by a direct attack upon France—or by a war to be undertaken on the soil of Spain? What, if the position of Spain might be rendered harmless in rival hands —harmless as regarded us—and valueless to the Might not compensation for disparpossessors? agement be obtained, and the policy of our ancestors vindicated, by means better adapted to the present time? If France occupied Spain, was it necessary, in order to avoid the consequences of that occupation, that we should blockade Cadiz? No. I looked another way—I sought materials of compensation in another hemisphere. Contemplating Spain, such as our ancestors had known her, I resolved that if France had Spain, it should not be Spain 'with the Indies.' I called the New World into existence to redress the balance of the Old."

The effect which this memorable speech produced on the House of Commons is admitted, both by friends and foes, to have been quite unprece-"It was an epoch in a man's life to have heard him," writes a member who was present. "When, in the style and manner of Chatham, he exclaimed, 'I looked to Spain in the Indies; I called a New World into existence to redress the balance of the Old;" the effect was actually terrific. It was as if every man in the House had Mr. Canning seemed actually to been electrified. have increased in stature, his attitude was so majestic. I remarked his flourishes were made with his left arm; the effect was new and beautiful; his chest heaved and expanded; his nostril dilated; a noble pride slightly curled his lip; and age and sickness were dissolved and forgotten in the ardour of youthful genius." "The whole House were moved," says Mr. Stapleton, "as if an electric shock had passed through them: they all rose for a moment to look at him! This effect I witnessed from under the gallery." And Mr. Canning himself, writing two days afterwards to Lord Granville, says, "If I know anything of the House of Commons from thirty-three years' experience, or if I may trust to what reaches me in report of feelings out-of-doors, the declaration of the obvious but unsuspected truth, that 'I called the New World into existence to redress the balance of the Old,' has been more grateful to English ears and to English feelings, ten thousand times, than would have been the most satisfactory announcement of the intention of the French Government to withdraw its army from Spain."

We have described the general principles of a foreign policy which proved eminently successful: one or two minor points remain to be noticed. Canning was personally a very skilful diplomatist. His tact, penetration, and judgment were conspicuous; and he played his antagonists with the ease of a master. His apparent frankness and unreserve disarmed the most astute; while he delighted to tease and perplex the dull, and the pretentious, with knotty problems, and intricate complications. But when in earnest his tone was at once manly and moderate. He never bullied, or threatened, "I abhor menace till one means or stormed. action," he said. A thorough Englishman both in taste and temper, he was the first Foreign Secretary who insisted that English, not French, should be used in our diplomatic correspondence. "Whatever we may have to say hereafter, be it high or humble, soothing or threatening, warlike or pacific, I trust we shall never again submit to speak any language but our own." When he came to the Foreign Office in 1822, he wrote to the ambassador at St. Petersburg, "You know my politics well enough to know what I mean when I say, that for Europe I shall be desirous now and then to read England." This is indeed one of the most characteristic features of his official life. whatever he said, or did, there is the magnanimity of the English statesman, the moderation of the English gentleman.

The last months of Mr. Canning's life, though

the most brilliant, are also the most painful. His elevation to the Premiership on the death of Lord Liverpool was not effected without great opposi-The Duke of Newcastle called on the Sovereign, and threatened to withdraw the support of the Tory aristocracy from the Government, if Mr. Canning were placed at its head. Duke of Wellington, Mr. Peel, Lord Eldon, and several other members of the Cabinet, simultaneously resigned, on the ground that on the question of Catholic Emancipation they differed from the Premier. It was confidently expected that, under these discouragements, Mr. Canning would be forced to abandon the task. But his enemies had misunderstood their man. He quickly succeeded in forming an Administration, composed of the more tolerant section of the Whigs, and of the representatives of that great moderate middle party, which his genius had created alike in the country and in the Legislature. The resentment of the defeated Tories knew no bounds. The language which they employed to denounce the Minister would have disgraced Billingsgate. Night after night he was attacked with an acrimony which recalled the more discreditable features of the conflict of the Coalition with Pitt. Canning maintained his position with simplicity, with manliness, with a Pitt-like hauteur. At length, after having answered, fully and temperately, all the charges directed against him, he declined to protract the controversy. Until a direct vote of censure was moved, no threats, no expostulations, no

entreaties, would induce him, he declared, to open his lips.

The subordinate members of "the pack who bayed him to death" are now forgotten; but the conduct of Sir Robert Peel to his old colleague still invokes the justifications of his friends. These have been numerous and elaborate; successful they have not been. Upon the whole, it is better, we fancy, to admit that Sir Robert's treatment of Mr. Canning was the fruit of a very natural jealousy, than to trace it to the influence of high-toned and scrupulous motives. Even great statesmen are not exempted from the vindictive feelings that afflict ordinary mortals. Peel disliked Canning, and under Canning it was virtually impossible that he could serve. This is the plain explanation of the whole matter, and posterity will not construe too hardly an inevitable antipathy.

The contest killed Canning. That virulent and unscrupulous hostility proved too much for a constitution already shattered by disease. During the whole session he had been miserably ill; he rose from a sick-bed to deliver his great speeches on Portugal; a cold caught at the Duke of York's funeral, in the chapel of St. George at Windsor, aggravated his disorder. He continued, however, to fight the enemy with indomitable resolution to the end. But it was plain that his exhausted system could not for any long time sustain the strain. On the 3d of August he was declared to be in imminent danger; on the morning of the 8th he died. "Sir M. Tierney felt his pulse,

thought for a second that he was gone, but he still breathed. In a few seconds there ceased to be any sign of breathing. He passed away so quietly that the exact moment could not be ascertained, but it was between twelve and ten minutes before four." Almost the last intelligible words he uttered were,—"This may be hard upon me, but it is harder upon the King."

And so he died—the last of a dynasty of statesmen.

One word in conclusion upon the moral which the lives of these great leaders enforces—the moral, namely, that party is essential to the effective and vigorous exercise of representative Government. No lesson is at the present day more neglected by politicians, or requires more frequently to be repeated.

The age is intolerant of dogmatic teaching. strives to emancipate itself from the fetters of party "The letter killeth; the spirit giveth shibboleths. life; we will live and not die;" is the aspiration that everywhere seeks articulate expression. diæval catholicism tried hard to erect the "letter" into a law of life. The Reformation, in its various phases, was a protest against the experiment; a protest partial and inconclusive indeed; for the sixteenth century only contrived to substitute local creeds and provincial standards—systems built up at Augsburg or Geneva-for the "Catholic and Apostolic faith," which ruled the Christendom of the Crusaders. The Reformation was a revolt from the spiritual dogmatism of Rome; the nineteenth century is in revolt against the spiritual dogmatism of the Reformers.

The disruption of dogmas is visible alike in the experiences of political and religious life. The conviction that no creed can ever prove quite exhaustive, lies, in either case, at the root of the movement. Mr. Maurice in the religious, and Mr. Gladstone in the political world—the large-hearted churchman, and the ambiguous and ubiquitous politician—are perhaps the best representatives of a spirit, unsectarian at least in its origin, and tolerant in the practical charities it enforces.

That religious and literary controversies should have ceased to elicit the embittered hostility of past days, and should now be conducted in a spirit of conciliation and compromise, is a change with which we are not disposed to quarrel. But though in these matters the sharpness of opposition may have been beneficially mitigated, and the authority of dogmas not improperly relaxed, the conduct of public affairs in this country cannot with safety be subjected to the same influences. Political life deals with imperative and urgent necessities which demand prompt solution; and the traditions of party, though neither exhaustive nor comprehensive, are yet the best fitted for the work of practical government.

For this reason the maxim, "Measures, not men," intimately allied with the cast of feeling we describe, becomes of very questionable authority when applied to political life. True elsewhere, true in the region of pure thought and scientific research—it is not true in the senate, or at best only partially true. A great man is a more valuable commodity than a great measure; to have the national faith in the honesty of its great men shaken, is a national loss.

But every politician, however eminent, must accept the restraint of a political connection. If he separate himself from party, he separates himself from practical work. On the other hand, when a great statesman associates himself with a party, he not only raises its tone and reputation, but at the same time identifies it with his own convictions. Party is flexible; it has no immitigable traditions. The opinions, indeed, which a party holds are of subordinate importance. The triumph of a great principle is neither assisted nor retarded in any perceptible degree by the conflicts of professional politicians. Reform, Free Trade, Catholic Emancipation, are obtained when the nation demands them—neither earlier nor later.

What, then, is the appropriate function of party? The inquiry, in so far as it affects us, merges in this other—Can parliamentary government be conducted with energy and success except through the forms of party life? We think not. Deprived of the organization of party, a national council of six hundred members ceases to be a deliberative assembly. When we abolish sectional ties, we abolish the House of Commons. For it is the combination of party alone which prevents its members from sinking at once into an undisciplined and unworkable rabble, "a crowd of individuals," as Mr. Disraeli has said. If this be true, then, to adopt "measures, not men," as the stan-

dard of our public conduct, to disengage ourselves from local obligations, and to assume a position of impartial and passionless neutrality, must be to aim a blow at the first principles of our society.

But party is not only required to guarantee that the work of the nation shall be done, and done efficiently. It answers other, and, perhaps, even more important, ends. It preserves the self-respect of public men; it imparts chivalry and generosity to political rivalry; it teaches union, self-sacrifice, mutual honour, faith in friends, obedience to Without it official life would lose its raciness, bravery, vigour,—would become emasculated and enfeebled. It is the moral discipline of the constitution; and, because it is so, the government of this country has been conducted by independent statesmen, and not by the clerks of a bureau, or the favourites of a court. That a party, therefore, should be brave, honest, chivalrous, hightoned,—this, and not the abstract logic of its opinions, is the matter of chief moment. Opinions can be changed, are changed, every day; a moral habit quickly becomes inveterate. An opinion, however scientifically accurate, never fires the imagination nor touches the heart; it is character, genius, moral elevation, individual resource, that enlist sympathy, and secure support.

It becomes thus sufficiently obvious how much the popularity of a party depends upon the personal influence of its leader. The moral and intellectual force of the captain is half the battle. Nor without such a man to influence and to inspire his followers, can party government answer its

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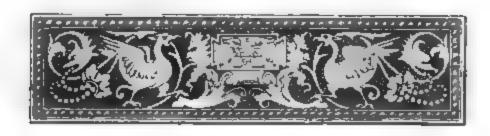
primary design. For to create and maintain a brave and high-spirited party, there must be a brave and high-spirited leader—a man generous, honest, incapable of meanness, compelling respect and confidence.

Such are the functions of party; and no politician has done more than the statesman who now leads the party which Pitt, and Canning, and Peel have led, to preserve it in force and effectiveness among us, and to give to political life—what has been rightly considered the best guarantee for its purity—"vigour of hostility and sharpness of opposition." Mr. Tennyson has drawn a vivid picture of the man,—

Who breaks his birth's invidious bar,
And grasps the skirts of happy chance,
And breasts the blows of circumstance,
And grapples with his evil star:

Who makes by force his merit known,
And lives to clutch the golden keys,
To mould a mighty State's decrees,
And shape the whisper of the throne;—

and the position occupied by the leader of the opposition—the merited reward of an intrepid intellect and a lofty ambition—is a striking testimony to the liberal traditions and the generous instincts of the high-born and high-bred gentlemen, who, for generations, have taken their leaders from among the sons of the people.



THE WHIG HISTORIAN.

A "LAST WORD" ON LORD MACAULAY.

That sober freedom, out of which there springs,
Our loyal passion for our temperate kings.

ALPRED TENNYSON.

T is too late, and too early, to speak further of Lord Macaulay. The verdict of his contemporaries has been recorded; the verdict of posterity cannot be anticipated. Before the grave in the Abbey had been closed, a hundred rapid and brilliant pens had said almost all that could be said of the great man who had ceased from his labours. The brilliancy of our periodical literature is as marvellous as its rapidity. Leading articles, which would have brought fortune and permanent fame to Addison or Steele, appear each morning in the columns of the Times, and are forgotten before the second edition is published. That the sentence pronounced upon our great men by these organs of public opinion should be more brilliant than accurate, more antethetical than sound, is of course to be looked for. A man penning an article at midnight, which is to be read in Paris on the following afternoon, has no time for subtle discrimination or nice analysis. He selects the striking peculiarities of a character, the salient points of a career, and on these he bases an estimate which, though impressive and picturesque, is necessarily exaggerated.

In spite of the conviction I have expressed, a few "last words" may, without impropriety, be now added. Two bulky volumes of Miscellaneous Writings have been recently published, and some of the contents—one piece in particular—place Lord Macaulay's character in, what the public may justly consider, a new light.

It can hardly be said that Macaulay belonged to the very highest order of minds. I do not think that he did. In no department except the historical did he shew pre-eminent capacity, and even his History is open to the charge of being only a splendid and ornate panorama. His was not a creative intellect. It could not have fashioned A Midsummer Night's Dream, a Faust, or The Cenci. He wrote spirited lyrics in which the traditions and associations of a historic people are handled with consummate judgment; but we miss the spontaneous and unsystematic music, the inartificial and childlike grace, of the true ballad.* The

* There is a very graceful little song written by Lord Macaulay in 1827, and included in his *Miscellaneous Writings* (ii. 417). But comparing it with any of the Laureate's, we detect at a glance the great gulf between true poetry and the most effective and finished copy.

O stay, Madonna! stay;
'Tis not the dawn of day

That marks the skies with yonder opal streak;

The stars in silence shine;

Then press thy lips to mine,

And rest upon my neck thy fervid cheek.

lyrist is the creature of impulse, and Macaulay was never impulsive. Lofty, unimpassioned, self-restrained, he never confesses to any of the frailties of genius. He had great natural powers, no doubt; his memory was prodigious and exact; his understanding just and masculine; still, it seems to me that he was in everything indebted

O sleep, Madonna! sleep;
Leave me to watch and weep
O'er the sad memory of departed joys,
O'er hope's extinguished beam,
O'er fancy's vanished dream,
O'er all that nature gives and man destroys.

O wake, Madonna! wake;
Even now the purple lake
Is dappled o'er with amber flakes of light;
A glow is on the hill;
And every trickling rill
In golden threads leaps down from yonder height.

O fly, Madonna! fly;
Lest day and envy spy
What only love and night may safely know;
Fly and tread softly, dear!
Lest those who hate us hear
The sound of thy light footsteps as they go.

Then take at a venture any stanza of the Laureate's:-

Ask me no more; what answer should I give?

I love not hollow cheek or faded eye;

Yet, O my friend, I will not have thee die!

Ask me no more, lest I should bid thee live;

Ask me no more.

Ask me no more; thy fate and mine are sealed;
I strove against the stream, and all in vain;
Let the great river take me to the main;
No more, dear love, for at a touch I yield;
Ask me no more.

more to art than to nature. He is the highest product of a profound and exquisite culture. This of course detracts from the quality of his handi-Only the work of authentic genius is im-The work of the artificer, however perishable. elaborate, however curiously finished, does not sur-But Macaulay unquestionably had genius of a kind: the genius which moulds the results of immense industry into a coherent and consistent whole. This is a fine and a most rare gift; and we are not wrong when we assert that its owner must always be, even when not of the highest order, a man of genius. Associated with the somewhat artificial constitution of his powers, is the want of flexibility which he shews. There is little virtue in the agility of the jester, or the suppleness of the mimic; but Macaulay wanted that natural lightness or airiness of touch, which characterises the working of a thoroughly creative mind. He assailed pigmies with eighty pounders. His heavy metal did its work well; but it struck right and left, the small as well as the great, without comparison, or a nice discrimination. one of the greatest masters of the English tongue. The ordered march of his lordly prose, to use once more a used-up simile, is stately as a Roman legion's. Still it is ponderous, compared at least with the unaffected freedom, and the flexible life, of Shakspeare's, or Fielding's, or Charles Lamb's. But the art with which this defect is concealed is, like every other detail of Lord Macaulay's art, perfect in its way. The style is ponderous, but there is no monotony. Short sentences, which, like the fire of sharp

shooters through cannon, break the volume of sound, are introduced at stated intervals into each paragraph. A Martial, or Junius-like, epigram follows the imposing burst of eloquence, with which Burke or Brougham might have clenched a great harangue. There is no slovenliness in these finished pages. But to make the severe and jealous supervision too obvious would break the spell. So any avowal of the labour that has been expended is studiously avoided. An air of negligence is affected. Colloquial expressions are introduced. The immense industry is covertly disowned.

Lord Macaulay's elaborate polish has proved, we think, exceedingly valuable to our rapid, perplexed, and somewhat incoherent age. Too many of our ablest men are apt to speak and think in heroics. Their likings and dislikings are equally violent, and equally valueless. That there is something fascinating in the passionate theology and philosophy of the age, we all admit. The fanatic in politics and religion makes many converts; toleration is a plant of a slow, laborious, and difficult growth. Lord Macaulay was no fanatic. He was neither a moral, nor an intellectual, bigot. rhetorician by temperament, he was saved from the sins of the rhetoricians by his vigorous manliness, his justice of judgment, and his admirable It cannot be said that his speculations on any topic were very profound; but, as far as they went, they were clear, accurate, above all luminous. His logic, if not exhaustive, was exact and incisive. He seldom undertook any argument which he had not mastered. He never indeed quite rose to the

height of the great argument of Puritanism; but, accepting the limited data with which he started, his conclusions were irresistible. There were spiritual capacities and mental needs in the heroes of the Commonwealth which provoked them into action, and which made them what they were to England. These Macaulay never comprehended; his plummet could not fathom them; they lay beyond the reach of his even temper, and unimpassioned intellect. His critical creed was marked by the same narrowness. He considered Samuel Rogers a greater singer than Samuel Coleridge. He relished the exquisite refinement of the Italy, and he respected a writer who was at once a finished gentleman, and a fastidious poet. uncouthness, the slovenliness, the eccentricities, the want of taste and judgment, of the Windermere brethren, were sins that he could not tolerate. Nay, perhaps, he was altogether incapable of understanding the vague and fitful feelings which they tried to render, and which give a peculiar charm to the muse of Shelley and Tennyson. He insisted that whatever was said should be said clearly—should be written in words which men could read as they ran.

This song was made to be sung at night,
And he who reads it in broad daylight
Will never read its mystery right,
And yet—it is childlike easy.

"Nonsense!" he in effect replied; "if there is anything whatever to be read, it will read much better in the daylight than in the dark." Such a creed, of course, can only be held by one who is

destitute of the supremest elements of the poetic faculty—by a critic who has never been pursued by the haunting forms that people the twilight of the imagination. Correctness, finish, and a kind of obvious, if not very weighty truth, were what Macaulay constantly aimed at. Thus he seldom reached entire historical truth, or entire critical It is a thousand pities that he did not write a history of the reign of Queen Anne. Both the poets and the politicians of that age (with one superb and sombre exception) were men whom he could thoroughly gauge. His picture of that brilliant group of versatile, accomplished, witty, corrupt, and splendid gentlemen, would have sparkled like the life which it represented. would have described with inimitable effect statesmen who were wits and poets, and poets who were wits and statesmen. But his hand faltered when he had to register grander passions and darker conflicts. The spiritual pains, the stormy struggles, which tore England asunder in the seventeenth century, were put aside by him The men who embodied and with disrelish. represented this mental strife in the nation—these diseased aspirations after a Divine kingdom and governor-were treated with coldness and disrespect. The strongest, richest, most unconventional, most complicated characters, become comparatively commonplace when he touches them. The virtue is taken out of them. Even the men he most admires are reduced to the most ordinary types. The historical Whig-steady, sagacious, moderate, never unselfishly imprudent, never honestly intemperate—is his ideal of human nature. A very good one in its way; though one sometimes fancies that the reckless and blundering devotion of these simple country gentlemen, and yeomen, to the falsest of kings, is more generous, and perhaps even more heroic.

But, as I have said, it is this very absence of enthusiasm, this essential moderation of character, this almost finical polish, which has made Lord Macaulay's influence so valuable. We were all in danger of going to the opposite extreme. Carlyle's passionate and speculative genius (for his genius is speculative, however realistic it may appear in certain aspects) seemed at one time likely to sweep all before it. We were going to revolutionize our morals, our politics, and our theology. We were going to transform our heroes into saints, and to paint the devil (when we did not whitewash him from hoof to horns) even blacker than of old. We were going to untie "red tape," and to put "earnest" men into the public offices. "Gigs," "shams," classical English, and other respectable institutions, were to be abolished. The Church of the Future was to embrace Mahomet, Confucius, and Mrs. Brownrigg. I know when I write these sentences that I am caricaturing Mr. Carlyle's opinions; but I am not caricaturing the feelings which his writings stirred in the minds of many of his disciples. Now, against such feelings-which were indeed the natural product of an age of intense mental excitement, remarkable scientific progress, strongly developed egotism—an antidote was

found in Lord Macaulay. It was an immense advantage to have at the head of our literature a man who thought calmly, who spoke moderately, who wrote fastidiously, whose enthusiasm was never intemperate, whose judgment was never excited. This great potentate in letters opposed to the license of speculation and the riot of the imagination, a simple theory of morals, simple system of politics, and a simple code of criticism. He did not recognise many new men and things that were alike good and true; that he did not recognise them may be traced possibly to some mental defect; but this very narrowness of intellectual sympathy enabled him effectively to stem the current. Men who are perplexed by the controversy of subtle motives, and complicated passions, seldom think with clearness, or act with decision. And this simplicity of mental insight in Macaulay must not be confounded with intellectual rigidness or the barrenness of theory. It was a simplicity more historical than logical. A Frenchman similarly gifted would have arrived at universal suffrage and electoral districts; but Macaulay, with his historic culture, and his English associations, could not become a political dogmatist. So, instead of driving him into democracy or absolutism, it made him, on the contrary, regard with hearty admiration the rough adjustments, the intricate compromises, the balanced inconsistencies, which are so unmeaning to the strictly scientific intellect, but on which old and historic societies must rest.

Lord Macaulay was thus, alike by inheritance

and temperament, a Whig. As such, in the cant of the day, he may be considered a "representative man." Whiggery has had no more characteristic, no more illustrious, interpreter. Had he been endowed with wider aspirations, or broader sympathies, he would not have represented his party so faithfully as he did. Tory and Radical politicians are frequently men of fervid genius. They require to be so. The Conservative, who invests the constitution with a halo of mysterious sanctity, borrows the colours from his imagination; the Radical who sighs for an ideal republic—the Milton who dreams of a perfectly ordered commonweal, whose king is God—exerts the constructive powers of the imagination, no less than religious or philosophical enthusiasm. the Whig is thoroughly practical. He is satisfied with things as they are: having no blind attachments, however, he does not object to reforms, especially if they effect no change. But he does not expect much from them—as he does not venerate the venerableness of the Constitution, so neither does he hail the approach of the civitas Dci. A temperate respect is about the warmest political emotion of which he is capable. his prejudices are not immoderate. Lord Macaulay was a great man, but he was a Whig great man. The subtleties of the imagination did not perplex him, nor did the contradictions of the moral life. Wordsworth's description of a creature "moving about in worlds not realised," would have been singularly inapplicable to that compact, serene, and luminous mind. It was not agitated by "the obstinate questionings of sense and outward things" which have troubled the sagest men; nor by those high instincts

before which our mortal nature Doth tremble like a guilty thing surprised.

None of these dim and perilous tracks of the spirit were trodden by Lord Macaulay.

That Lord Macaulay's just and well-balanced intelligence did good service to us, we have admitted; but that it is sufficient for the Whig to continue to be what Lord Macaulay was, or that he can contrive to do good service of any kind by a servile imitation of his model, it is difficult to admit. The present condition of the Whigs shews on the contrary that a party which appropriates none of the elements of the current life and thought must perish. The Whig in 1860 is intellectually. if not politically, dead. A party whose notions of National Reformation are exhausted by a sixpound franchise, betrays a poverty of thought that cannot be tolerated even in our governors. Lord Macaulay himself the traditions of his party exercised a questionable influence. In his History, English political life becomes an affair of the Senate rather than of the people. We lose sight of the nation in the constitution. Those slowlymatured national convictions which alone work out great constitutional changes are disregarded, or, at least, are made to play a less important part in the development of society, than a wordy debate in the Commons, or a conflict between the two Houses on a question of privilege.

It has been said that Lord Macaulay wanted

"heart." A certain coldness of manner and temperament undoubtedly characterized him. He had the reserve of the English gentleman—which, be it remembered, represents the self-respect and restraint as well as the shyness of the islander. Of his private life (though those best qualified to judge have spoken very warmly of unaffected kindness and wide charities) I cannot speak; and of his writings it is enough to say, that whenever right or truth is menaced, his vindication glows with manly fervour, and that his love for liberty is expressed in passages as full of fire as the poet's—

O ye loud waves! and O ye forests high!
And O ye clouds that far above me soar'd!
Thou rising sun! thou blue rejoicing sky!
Yea, everything that is and will be free!
Bear witness for me wheresoe'er ye be
With what deep worship I have still ador'd
The spirit of divinest liberty.

The truth appears to be that Macaulay had keen feelings, united with a tranquil loftiness of disposi-Fashioned in a heroic mould, he seldom broke down, or seemed to break down. It is well that we should fail sometimes; failure teaches us humility, and our own weakness. But Macaulay never failed—his life from its beginning to its close was a rapid success. Thus there is an air of impassiveness about him which men of harder lives, and more vehement passions, cannot long He is not arrogant exactly, but he shews no sense of frailty. The repose which marks him is not the repose which has been earned by desperate and hard-won victory; it is the

natural repose of those simple antique beings who dwelt amid the Etrurian woods, "while Italy was yet guiltless of Rome." They have not sinned, and they have not conquered sin; nor is the unruffled brow "entrenched" by the "deep scars of thunder," which mental anguish and conflict leave behind them. Such a character is not without its charm. The "noble calm" of Paganism appeals more directly to the mind than the meek virtues and the self-denying heroism of the cross.

Such is the general impression produced by what we know of the historian's life. But it is only fair to say, that, even in public, Macaulay sometimes visibly warmed. Our latest recollection of the orator is connected with the solitary mischance that chequered a career of otherwise uninterrupted success.

At the election of 1847 Mr. Macaulay lost his seat for Edinburgh. The 30th of July in that year was a discreditable day to the modern Athenians; it leaves a blot on their character for sagacity and generosity, and their subsequent recantation has not quite atoned for the evil which they then did. But it was no disgrace to Lord Macaulay; he lost his seat for the best of all reasons—because he would not betray the principles of "truth, peace, freedom, mercy," which he lived to vindicate, because he dared to be true to his convictions, and to his career. "A sullen priesthood, and a raving crowd," were able to inflict a keen mortification upon a great man; but he bore the pang, in public at least, with proud confidence and unresentful regret. It was thus that

he addressed the men who had done him, themselves, and their city this great wrong:—

"You have been pleased to dismiss me from your service, and I submit to your pleasure with-The generous conduct of those who out repining. gave me their support I shall always remember If anything has occurred of which with gratitude. I might justly complain, I have forgiven, and shall soon forget it. The points on which we have differed I leave with confidence to the judgment of my country. I cannot expect that you will at present admit my views to be correct; but the time will come when you will calmly review the history of my connection with Edinburgh. will then, I am convinced, acknowledge that if I. incurred your displeasure, I incurred it by remaining faithful to the general interests of the empire, and to the fundamental principles of the Constitu-I shall always be proud to think that I once enjoyed your favour; but permit me to say, I shall remember, not less proudly, how I risked and how I lost it."

These were the calm words of dignified rebuke and farewell which he addressed to the men who had defeated him; this was the only public acknowledgment he ever made of the pain that had been inflicted on him; and we now learn, and for the first time, how keenly he suffered. His posthumous works contain certain "Lines written in August, 1847," immediately after his defeat. He did not mean to hurt, but he has taken a bitter revenge,—for as long as the English language lasts these lines will live. The wounded warrior

retreats from the battle-ground; "the day of tumult, strife, defeat is o'er;" and in the stillness of night he gives utterance to his pain, and vindicates his integrity. The lines are very noble and simple; they are the nearest approach to genuine poetry that Macaulay, perhaps, ever made, for they come direct from the heart, and prove how immensely superior to any artifice, true feeling, in its simplest and most unadorned moods, always is. The queens of the world—gain, fashion, power, pleasure—sweep scornfully past the sleeping child; until One comes, "the last, the mightiest, and the best."

Oh, glorious lady! with the eyes of light,
And laurels clustering round thy lofty brow,
'Who by the cradle's side didst watch that night,
Warbling a strange sweet music, who wast thou?

The others may leave him unheeded, but She will stay by him to the end,—"Still smiling, though the tender may reprove, still faithful, though the trusted may betray."

"In the dark hour of shame, I deigned to stand
Before the frowning peers at Bacon's side:
On a far shore I smoothed with tender hand,
Through months of pain, the sleepless bed of Hyde:

"I brought the wise and brave of ancient days

To cheer the cell where Raleigh pined alone:

I lighted Milton's darkness with the blaze

Of the bright ranks that guard the eternal throne.

"And even so, my child, it is my pleasure
That thou not then alone shouldst feel me nigh,
When, in domestic bliss and studious leisure,
Thy weeks uncounted come, uncounted fly;

"Not then alone, when myriads, closely pressed Around thy car, the shout of triumph raise; Nor when, in gilded drawing rooms, thy breast Swells at the sweeter sound of woman's praise.

THE WHIG HISTORIAN.

"No: when on restless night dawns cheerless morrow, When weary soul and wasting body pine, Thine am I still, in danger, sickness, sorrow, In conflict, obloquy, want, exile, thine;

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- "Thine, where on mountain waves the snowbirds scream,
 Where more than Thule's winter barbs the breeze,
 Where scarce, through lowering clouds, one sickly gleam
 Lights the drear May-day of Antarctic seas;
- "Thine, when around thy litter's track all day
 White sandhills shall reflect the blinding glare;
 Thine, when, through forests breathing death, thy way
 All night shall wind by many a tiger's lair;
- "Thine most, when friends turn pale, when traitors fly, When, hard beset, thy spirit, justly proud, For truth, peace, freedom, mercy, dares defy A sullen priesthood and a raving crowd."

That is the punishment which a great man inflicts on his assailants. The warning should make us careful. It is not safe to expose ourselves to the shafts of the immortals. At the same time it may reassure the meanest who desires to be remembered. Let him wait patiently, and watch assiduously, and the opportunity to wound a great man, to sting him into retaliation, to extort a retort which the world will not willingly let die, is almost sure, one day or other, to arrive. The publicans and the pharisees of Edinburgh bided their time. Their labour has not been in vain; they have earned an imperishable notoriety.

The wrong indeed was redressed, as far as redress was possible. Reparation was made. The people of Edinburgh were eager to remove an unseemly stain from the escutcheon of their city. They succeeded. The broken ties were renewed; the old member once more met his constituents

in kindness. Five years had passed since he had stood among them,—and the years had left their marks upon all in that assembly,—upon him not Disease had even then begun its work. the least. The burly form was bent and attenuated; but the eye was still full of light, and the silver voice, though enfeebled, was liquid and syren-like as ever. It was the last great speech he ever made, and it recalled his greatest efforts. He was visibly affected when he rose, and when he alluded to the men of Edinburgh who had been taken away since he last stood among them, to the friendly faces and voices who would greet him no more, his voice shook painfully. "And Jeffrey, too," he added, with a suppressed sob, as he finished the There he faltered and stopped enumeration. short. The simple pause of feeling was more touching, and more expressive, than the most laboured panegyric could have been. Recovering his composure, he went on to sketch, in brilliant but gloomy colours, the terrible scenes which Europe had witnessed during the five years of war and revolution. And then he turned to our-"The madness of 1848," he said, "did not subvert the British throne. The reaction which followed has not destroyed British freedom. And why is this? Why has our country, with all the ten plagues raging around her, been a land of Goshen? Everywhere else was the thunder, and the fire running along the ground—a very grievous storm—a storm such as there was none like it since man was upon the earth, yet everything tranquil here; and then again thick night, darkness that might be felt, and yet light in all our dwellings." This was the most striking passage in his speech—a passage rendered impressive to his hearers not more by the scriptural simplicity and elevation of its language, than by the grand earnestness of the speaker as he uttered it.

The orator warmed with his theme; with the most skilful and stinging irony he attacked his opponents; with the bravest and most honest zeal he vindicated his friends. For a time the exhaustion of disease was overcome: his eye sparkled, his voice glowed; he was again the athlete in the proud confidence of his prime. But the excitement could not sustain him long: his voice failed him; and when he told his hearers in feeble accents,—" In no case whatever shall I again be a member of any ministry; during what may remain of my public life, I shall be the servant of none but you,"—they saw that he spoke truly; that he had really done with cabinets and governments here; that the feeble thread might be snapped without warning at any moment; and some, at least, among them felt grateful that the atonement which they owed to the great orator and historian of his generation, had not been delayed till it was too late.



POLITICS IN THE PARISH. BY THE RECTOR.

"An old man, sir; he will be talking; as they say, when the age is in, the wit is out: God help us—it is a world to see."

MUCH-ADO ABOUT NOTHING.

SOUTHDOWN, amid the green meadow-lands,

Quæ Liris quieta Mordet aqua tacitumus amnis,

is probably the prettiest and most unproductive village in the country-side. I have known it now for half-a-century; yet during all these years I have detected no evidence of change. Unlike the laird of the debateable land, the people do not "stand upon progress." Standing indeed in any attitude is not a vocation for which they seem specially adapted. Before each whitewashed cottage great rustic chairs of a curious and antique pattern have rested for generations, and on these the natives may sometimes be seen when the day's work is done—if, indeed, they ever do work, of which the evidence is meagre and unsatisfying.

For we do not encourage agricultural statistics. We have no model reaping-machines, no patent manures. We retain the scriptural sickle; and Ruth gleans leisurely among her master's sheaves. Lord John was told that we did not know how Hampden died on the field, and Sidney on the scaffold; so (there being besides a great Tory landowner in the neighbourhood) he left us out of Schedule B. Free trade has not affected our commercial relations with the world at large; and our internal traffic has always been conducted on those primitive principles of finance which lie at the root of the science. We do not agitate about Lord Palmerston's Reform Bill; nor hold public meetings for any purpose whatever-with one For on the first day of every week, exception. the entire population is gathered together within the dingy walls of the sanctuary—the "great dissenting interest" not being represented in this The old church is a primitive edifice, over and around which the ivy clusters in grave and sedate festoons—low-roofed, and with quaint gables and galleries that stoop down abruptly out of dark recesses, where emaciated spiders ply their unproductive craft—more, it would appear, as a matter of exercise than of profit; for they have long since finished all the flies in the edifice, and those that were not eaten have departed. At one side of the pulpit, and within reach of the pastor's hand stands an antique hour-glass, whose sands have run out. I know not by whom it was built and garnished, but they must have been pleasant and godly men, fearing the Lord indeed, but withal

wisely determined to make "the best of both worlds;" and still from ample and stately pews, luxuriously 'cushioned, and lined with rich faded damask drapery, the staid parishioners listen to the pleasant tones of the old man, who tells them of the rest that remaineth.

Were it not for this weekly gathering, I do not see how these simple souls could recollect that the years do roll on, and that in them they are born, and breeched, and buried. For there is no timepiece in the village that goes; the likeness of one, indeed, hangs over the porch of a dainty cottage, which nestles in a shady bower of laburnum, that in spring is all alight with golden fire. But it was always late, even in its best days; and as it grew in years, it grew in wariness and deliberation, until one morning it stopped altogether, and now points for ever with innocent pertinacity to the hour of II. The laureate has alluded to the present effect of its bleached and patient face in some happy but quaintish lines:—

In the afternoon they came into a land In which it seemed always—afternoon.

Fancy a land where it is always two o'clock P.M.—the hour when the mavis hides in the brake, and the kye stand knee-deep in the burn—the hour when the grasshopper chirrups drowsily in the grass, and the sun (if there be a sun) used to shew his sunniest face—the hour when the workman's barley-broth is brought to him, in a shining pitcher, by his curly-haired, bright-eyed, chubby-cheeked little daughter, and consumed leisurely on

the warm side of the hedge, among the wild roses and the thyme,—fancy such a land if you can, a land where time stands still, where there is no tomorrow morning, where you never shave in the dark, and you will obtain a notion of what Southdown

was, and is, and shall be—post aliis ex aguis.

The old Rector of Southdown was well-fitted The Rev. Abraham Oldbuck was a to the place. descendant of that Jonathan Oldbuck, of whom most of us have heard. Scarcely ever before, indeed, has man been more faithfully, or more lovingly, portrayed than the Laird of Monkbarns. The irritable goodness of heart, the quaint and unavailable erudition, the mingled parsimony and generosity, the characteristic combination of enthusiasm with shrewd and caustic sense, the hearty contempt for "womankind," and the buried vein of romantic passion which the bundle of faded letters, and the Eheu Evelina! disclose, constitute a delightful character. There were not a few points in which the Rector resembled the Laird. There had been an Evelyn—long ago—in his case He loved his church; he was a fierce Tory; and he would have parted with half his tithes for a musty manuscript, or a parcel of old stones. Under a very unworldly culture, his nature had become singularly rich, quaint, and racy. distinguished, it is true, by many curious eccentricities—odd, old-fashioned heresies about the king de facto and the king de jure; but they were the beautiful blemishes that we love, knowing how they issue out of the simplicity of a guileless heart. At the same time, there was nothing weak

or irresolute in his character: and I have seldom seen, when forced into practical life, a more vigorous or sagacious intellect.

The Reverend Abraham was, as I say, a fierce Tory, and a great pillar of the party in his native county. For forty years the Muttonhole Mercury was indebted to his pen for many of its most stirring manifesto s. The old gentleman was not a little vain of his literary prowess, and used to post regularly, every Saturday afternoon, half a dozen copies of the Mercury, to enlighten the friends who lived beyond the circle of its subscribers. I rather enjoyed some of his phillipics; they purported to be addressed to his brother Jacob, who had gone to Manchester, and there fallen into the political slough of Liberalism, and they pitched into the recreant Oldbuck with considerable asperity and effect. The rector was, no doubt, rather disposed to grow rhetorical and abusive,—so much so indeed that I used to entertain a shrewd suspicion that he delivered his lucubrations from the pulpit before publication, and that the bumpkins of Southdown had the benefit of them in the first instance. The opinions of the Octogenarian are of course quite out of date, but Lancelot has suggested to me that as fossils,—the bones of an extinct race,—they may not be entirely destitute of interest to men, like Mr. Dyce, or Professor Owen, who take an interest in the monsters of an-So, acting upon this hint, I have collected a little of the thunder that he uttered during the winter preceding his death.

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Rev. ABRAHAM OLDBUCK to his BROTHER JACOB.

About Reform.

God forbid, my dear Jacob, that I should not thank Him for the many noble works He has wrought for, and by, us during the last half century. That the nation is healthier and wealthier, that our empire is more consolidated, and that our commerce is more extended, are facts that no man in his senses can dispute. That, in an inventive and mechanical age, the inventive and mechanical genius of the Anglo-Saxon should have kept him in the van in most matters, is a natural, and not unjustifiable source of pride to us. As regards these things—the large results of national industry, the net profit on the empire—there can be no doubt that we have been prodigious gainers. We live longer, and we live better, and when we are dead we don't poison the living. The Board of Health empties our cesspools and our ditches, and the South-Western puts our bodies into a luggage-van, and, at the rate of fifty miles an hour, hurries the lifeless clay to the centre of the Hampshire moorland. It is a great consolation to know that our departed relatives go to "the bourne from which no traveller returns," along with hams, and sausages, and new books, and holiday visitors. Even on the brink of the grave the progress of the species is not arrested. The solemn funeral rites are performed "by contract," and "a purveyor of cheap burials" shovels the ashes of the deceased into kindred and unexpensive dust. Well—this too is an advance, no doubtlooked at, rationally and philosophically, we have made progress here as elsewhere; yet I remember, not unregretfully, the simple rustic procession,—the awed silence of the children, and the tearful faces of the women,—the tremulous voice of the old Archdeacon as he read the noble words, in which a Great Hope is enshrined, over the body of the aged parishioner, who had been his early comrade at the village school,—the homely but decent homage that we used to pay to death before "unrestricted competition" in funerals set in.

My clever friend, Mr. J. P. Robinson, does not approve of what he calls the "subdued sneer" in the last sentence. Free trade in beer, in beef, in brandy, and in burials is, he assures me, the great regenerative agency of modern society,—and a good deal more to the same effect. To which I reply in my old-fashioned clerical way, that as "to buy in the cheapest market, and sell in the dearest," is the corner-stone of the Christian system, those who do so will find, no doubt, that they have made a profitable investment in the Hereafter. "Which line is that?" he asks; "I don't know it." At which I am not surprised, understanding that Mr. Robinson supports the "broad gauge."

You have found out by this time, I daresay, that I am not much of a politician; but surely even a simple man can see that we have made a blunder somewhere. What a contrast, for instance, between the English labourer of fifty years ago, and of to-day! There is John Stokes passing the window at this moment, and I recollect

John Stokes's grandfather when he was about the same age. He was gamekeeper to the old Lord, and as fine a specimen of an English yeoman as you could wish to see. He loved the old place and the old family; how could he help it? own people had lived upon the land as long as my Lord's; the oaks in the chase were not more firmly rooted to the soil. He had been present at the bridal feast, at the birthday dance on the green; the little lord had climbed upon his knee; he had taught him to fish, and ride, and shoot; her little Ladyship, who grew to be so beautiful and famous, took her first canter under his charge; and John's brawny arms had carried the brave, bright-eyed youngster—the pet of the family, who fell in one of Lord Wellington's bloody battles in the Peninsula—through many a boyish scrape. How could he help loving the place and the people? or the cottage where he himself was born, and where his forefathers—who had fought in the old fighting times of English history by the side of the old fighting lords—had lived and died? The cottage might have been better ventilated, I dare say; the rain soaked through the turf-roofing, at times, in winter; the goodwife's fare was none of the best; John himself was no great "scholard," and it was a mighty labour for him to "spell out" a chapter of the Gospel on the Sunday evening before going to bed.

That was what I remember. This is what I see.
The old intimate connection that subsisted between the Lord and his tenantry has been put an end to. Changes of one kind or another (re-

sulting, I believe, from letting Free Trade loose upon him all at once, before he had time to get out of its way), reduced my Lord's income so considerably that he and his family find it convenient to live mostly at Florence now. That part of the estate which was sold was acquired by a pushing Manchester gentleman, who insisted that the relations between himself and his farmers should be exclusively regulated, as he said, by "the eternal laws of profit and loss." He has established a mechanics' institute in the county-town (to which no mechanics belong), where last autumn he delivered a lecture on "The Working Classes," in which he shewed that manly independence in the English labourer's character, was inconsistent with love and respect—"a slavish devotion"—to the ancient proprietors of the soil. John Stokes, to do him justice, has not been slow to avail himself of these suggestions. He never touches his hat to a gentleman, nor-O Saxon chivalry!-even to a lady now; he never goes to church; when he comes by chance across the parson he greets him with a surly nod, or a smothered oath. All his children are well educated (the two eldest were packed off to Australia, and went to perdition at the diggings), but somehow they don't look so healthy and honest as their great-grandfather did when he was a boy. The old family Bible is laid away,—a few leaves are abstracted from it now and then to light the "cutty," but on most other occasions it is left undisturbed on the top of the cupboard among the dust. In lieu thereof John reads the Trades Union Gazette, where he picks up

You know I am old fashioned; and that, I suppose, is "the reason why" it seems to me that John, though nominally richer than his grandfather was, is really the poorer of the two. cottage is snugger than it was when I recollect it first; but a presence has vanished out of it. Lares and the Penates have made a clean sweep of it. John's grandfather knew something of the annals of the House his fathers had served,—something, therefore, of the great history of his country; the past was not quite barren nor unfruitful to him; he was himself connected with the great deeds and men of his people,—and he knew it, and was proud of the knowledge. His cottage might be rude and mean; but at least it was not quite unfurnished, when such memories could find a place beneath its roof. The only personage the present John cares a sixpence for is—himself. He has no past. He has no household gods. To him his "landlord" is a tax-gatherer only; his country the county police.

That is the change I see. We have put away, out of the minds of our people, the old names and

the old things, round which—as round some massive antique ruin which the nestling ivy caresses, and out of which the wallflower springs—the pleasant and time-honoured associations of many simple generations lingered; we have put all these away, and put up in their place this great, double-faced, devouring, Idol, which we call "Free Competition." The reform is a little perilous perhaps; nations are controlled by their sympathies as well as by their laws; when we get rid of the restraining sympathies, may we not also, unawares, abolish the protective duties?

I know that Mr. J. P. Robinson will not listen to me; that if I quote ST. PAUL to him, he will brandish MR. MILL in my face, or brain me with COLONEL THOMPSON. I never heard certainly that the *suprema lex* of the Pauline morality was "to *lick* creation." But of course the reply to this sort of professional argument is obvious, and its validity must be admitted at once.

But John P.
Robinson he
Says they didn't know everything down in Judee.*

About the Working Classes.

You say that I am a bit of a grumbler, Jacob. Well, there are worse people than grumblers in this bad world. The humbug who goes about with an eternal smile on his false face is a worse man. Any amount of honest, wholesome, grumb-

^{*} I see that Mr. Oldbuck must have been studying The Biglow Papers—a book discovering a more thoroughly original and peculiar vein of genius, than any other I have met with for years.

ling is more endurable than the ghastly simper, which makes the jaws ache so. Let us rather be obstinate and morose, and exasperated, than join in the cuckoo cry "Peace, peace," when there is no peace. I like the surly, bulldog, species of John Bull, that used to shew on the stage during the war. At any rate, I prefer him infinitely to the man who acquiesces in perpetuum, and whom no wrong, nor falsehood, nor injustice, can drive into Opposition.

There are worse things in this bad world Than bitter jests and bearing free.

Even the thin, acid, ungenerous, grumbler is not without his use. Even for John of Gaunt we must render thanks.

You have had your great workmen's "strike" in the metropolis; we have had our small strike in the parish here. What do I think of it? Indeed I find it very difficult to think at all clearly about it; impossible to think quite in the summary way that our jaunty leading journalists would have us. The surprising assurance with which the pen-andink men of the daily press discuss every terrestrial and celestial topic, fairly takes away my breath Nothing can ruffle that divine comsometimes. I believe if the last trumpet were to placency. sound to-morrow, the Editor would have his leader about it ready for the evening paper. But I cannot get at my convictions in this summary way. I am often sorely puzzled—often vehemently per-It is such a difficult thing to form an opinion that will not do injustice to some branch of the case. Mr. John P. Robinson-my Manchester friend, who bought Broadacres from the Earl—is very sarcastic on what he calls my "timidity." That I own is a failing to which Mr. Robinson is not subject. He lectures the universe, and patronises Providence, like an Irish Bishop. "I tell you," he said to me lately, "there cannot be two opinions about it. 'T is a monstrous conspiracy of the men. Every hand in my mill shall sign the "Declaration" to-morrow, or he packs, bag and baggage."

And he was as good as his word. The mill has been stopped for three months. Never a human creature comes near it. The fires are out; the doors are locked; the huge engine is silent; the whole of that vast and intricate machinery has been paralyzed. But it is not in the mill alone that a change is visible. In the village where the "hands" live, I—who know each of them by head-mark—can see a still sadder change. Want, misery, privation, are doing their work there. If this strike last another month, what between hunger and hopelessness, there will be a pestilence in the place.

Our political economy is no doubt a very seductive idol, and I do not wonder that it should have many worshippers. But could I bring one of our flippant Liberal journalists, who are content that "the individual wither, if the world be more and more," that the workman perish, if wealth accumulate,—could I bring him face to face with some of our starving artizans, and shew him the bony fingers, the hollow eyes, the pinched and wasted cheeks, I do think that he would write

hereafter in a more humble spirit,—feeling that, in the midst of these fierce practical conflicts, his pet theories of the universe become somewhat helpless. I cannot say that I care much for the sentimental Alton Locke-ism of the day (if I may be allowed to coin a word, and to do so without desiring to discredit one of our most able and earnest writers and clergymen), and I fancy that certain rather rhetorical tears are shed over "the sorrows of the poor." But it is no idle sentiment which makes me say, that the sight of the wretchedness, that has come upon the poor souls in that village, is infinitely painful to me,—is sometimes too painful to be contemplated at all, if one's duty did not force one to face it. There is a pathos down yonder which I miss in a good many tragedies I have Peter's rosy-cheeked children are rosycheeked no longer; the poor little souls are almost too hungry to play; their mother, Elsie Burns, who used to be our May Queen ten years ago, is trying to make her husband's cast-off suit look a little decent again, so that he may pawn the one he is wearing now. 'Tis a terrible trial to Elsie, and to her husband no less—who, inventive and ingenious, is never so happy as when fully employed. But let me say plainly—not caring though Mr. J. P. Robinson and his confrères may call the sentiments revolutionary—that the way in which these people bear their suffering, the cheerfulness, the resolute manliness, the vigorous, homely, hopefulness which they display, the ready unselfish assistance which they render to each other in their need, stirs in me a feeling of profound and heartfelt

admiration. Nay, "admiration" is a stunted word, but let it stand. I care not what the cause may be for which they suffer; whether their conclusions be true or false, they meet hunger and dire necessity as the Martyrs—"in our father's time and in the old time before them"—met death and mutilation. There is good stuff in the English nation when it can produce, out of its lowest social layer, such virtues as these.

I hail thee, genuine English born; Not yet the lineage is outworn That owns a mar like thee.

I dined at Broadacres last week, and met our county member. I like Horace Vernon; I knew his father, the old admiral, well. I believe the son to be a more "Liberal man"—in the best sense of the word—than many of our "Liberal members." The talk after dinner turned on this unhappy strike; and our host, with shrewd argument and harsh sense, defended the conduct of the employers.

Vernon was at first inclined to acquiesce; but his tone suddenly changed when the well-known "Declaration" of the Master Builders was alluded to.

"I don't like it," he said frankly: "it seems to me an essentially mean and arbitrary expedient. It is not English: it is opposed to the practice of our Government, and must be injurious to the self-respect, and moral manhood, of every mechanic who signs it. Were I the owner of one of your great works, I should regard with intense suspicion every man who undertakes the obligations it im-

poses. What right have we, I should like to know," he went on, kindling up as the old admiral used to kindle up, when he fought the last hour at Trafalgar over again, "to forbid our workmen (when they have finished our work) to go to their Trade Unions, any more than you have to prevent me attending the Royal Society, or a county meeting, or Lady Milkanwather's 'At Homes?' . The private life of the mechanic is his own property—the one is quite as sacred, ought to be as freely enjoyed by him, as fully protected for him, as the But you, forsooth—you, the middle classes of England—will not allow these working men of England to do this or to do that; they must think as you bid them, they must pick their steps as you Call it what you will, I call such an inquisition tyranny,—rank, ugly, tyranny. you that if such a scheme succeeds it will destroy the self-respect which every free man should preserve,—which, if he does not preserve he becomes a slave and a moral poltroon. You say that we, the Tory party, fear the people, would keep them down, will not enfranchise them. I venture to say that such another attempt upon the liberties of the English labourer as you, the employers of English labour, are now making, has not been tried in this land since serfdom was abolished was never dreamt of by those you call the enemies of labour and liberty. A genuine old English landlord could not have imagined such an expedient; the notion would have been quite foreign to him; for an unassuming, but practical, tolerance was engrained in his constitution. And I

believe, consequently, that there is more real sympathy, a better understanding of, and a truer respect for, each other, between the working men of England and us, 'the social aristocrats,' than between them and you, 'the political democrats.'"

I incline to agree with Horace, and, if I am not mistaken, the working classes begin to appreciate the significance of the contrast. The people are suspicious of their parasites; while they can, and do, recognize the friendliness of those who help them not only against others, but against themselves. • They have learned that those who have tried to wield, for their own selfish ends, the English democracy, form, in reality, a class whose interests are divided from, whose sympathies are adverse to, their own. And nothing has taught them this more emphatically, more sternly, than what has happened during the recent strikes. It has raised a wall of separation between the working men, and those who call themselves the leaders of the Liberal party throughout the coun-Even should the employers succeed in starving the men into submission,—as I have little doubt that they will, this time,—they will leave a heavy outstanding debt of ill feeling, and bad blood, to be paid back some time.

A meeting of mechanics was held in the county town last week to consider the policy which the masters had thought fit to adopt, and I attended it. I was much impressed by the ability and moderation of most of the speakers. Though I could read on many of the faces the evidences of the hard struggle going on—that pained, and

I don't say that I agree with much that was said; I think, even with my perfunctory knowledge of politics, I detected some gross blunders, many mistakes obvious enough to those whose culture had been less narrow. But I confess that I did not see any answer to the proposition which the meeting was asked to endorse—that the workman is entitled to combine with his fellows. "Leave labour and capital to adjust their differences; any artificial attempt to raise the rate of wages is opposed to the sound laws of economical science." A very good argument for capital to urge, no doubt-capital being able to say to the workman, "Either take what I offer you, orstarve." But is not the workman entitled to reply,

"I cannot meet you on an equal footing; when we disagree as to the remuneration you are to give me, the question comes to be a simple question of time—who of us is able to hold out the longer? My labour is my all; I have no reserve to fall back upon; the moment my wages are taken from me, I starve. I must either die or capitulate. But though I withdraw my labour, however much you may be temporarily inconvenienced, you don't starve—immediately, at least, as I do. You go on buying food and raiment, keeping body and soul together, until you have starved me into submission. That is the difference between us; and if there is that difference -if from our relative positions I am thus so entirely at your mercy—what is there to prevent you exacting from me the most unreasonable and obnoxious service? There can be no stronger proof of the power of your position than the bare existence of this degrading "Declaration." The necessity that is thus imposed upon us, to trust ourselves entirely to your forbearance, is good neither for you nor for us. It makes you despotic; it makes us servile. We will combine; we will come to discuss these social questions with you, not as powerless, isolated, and unprotected units, but as members of a great society, pledged to assist one another.'

I tell you, Jacob, that these are the feelings which are fermenting in the hearts of our working men. I do not say that they are true; I only say that they exist—that they are natural—that the questions which excite them are difficult and

complicated—that the men who urge them should be calmly reasoned with, not scornfully assailed. Yet next morning the local Liberal organ treated the whole affair with mocking ridicule, and the day following its criticisms were endorsed by *The Olympian* in one of the cleverest, and most sparkling, leaders I have read for a long time. I do not know, however, that it was peculiarly calculated to satisfy the reason, or soothe the feelings, of those against whom it was directed.

Such is the response which our working men receive from the party Mr. Robinson represents from politicians who are so wedded to economical formulas, and absolute theories, that they will let the sky fall, before they do justice, or exercise mercy. Nor do they confine themselves to words; they are not satisfied with insulting speech: they have practically declared that every English workman shall either starve or forfeit his self-respect. Such a policy is neither honourable nor safe. Were it not that there is a party in the State which honours though it does not flatter the working classes,—which listens with respect to their complaints,—which redresses them where it is practical,—which answers them in kindness and seriousness where it is not so,—and which preserves, with jealous anxiety, every outwork that guards the social freedom, and the self-respect. which is the common heritage of the English gentleman, and the English peasant,-I should contemplate with not a little apprehension the relations which "labour and capital" are beginning to assume towards each other in this country.

About Reform.

You decline, my dear Jacob, to be identified with John Burley. "Why does Abraham harp everlastingly upon that string?" you ask. "Why does he employ this Birmingham Hammer to drive home his nails? I am a Radical myself; but, Heaven knows, I love neither the man nor his works. There are better Liberals than this pugnacious Peacemonger."

Were John Burley "only that and nothing more," I should certainly not use him to point my argument. His personal gifts do not entitle him to the homage of hostile criticism. The dearth of eloquence among us has given a factitious reputation, indeed, to his vigorous invective; but were no other interests involved, I would not stoop to assail the bastard fame of the demagogue. The ignis fatuus will go out in due time,--it will pale as the light grows. But John Burley is the representative of a class,—he is the herald of a political system to which no toleration ought to be extended. Between that system, and whatever is free and noble in England, it is and must be—war to the knife. We cannot afford to be nicely critical, and studiously magnanimous, when a great danger menaces the State. To hesitate is to lose the gamé. But my charge against you, and others who know the value of the stake is, that you do hesitate. You temporise with the enemy who lurks at the gate . ,—feeling blankly, in your heart of hearts, all the time, that the Capitol will be his prize if you are beaten. This will not do.

lay down your arms, or keep to your defences like men. Take the former course, and you will, at least, leave places open for better men to fill; take the latter, and—my word for it—you will speedily find that this ugly spectre which has frightened you so, which has almost driven you out of your wits, is what Andrew calls "a tatty-bogle" only,—a dirty rag with a turnip a-top.

To fear John Burley is foolish; to fear the system he represents is a duty binding on all who understand what the controversy involves. man himself I have no fear; I use his name only as the symbol of a cause; this maker of sharp sentences is neither a Cromwell nor a Napoleon.* I have seen him occasionally;—once in the House of Commons (when I was up about the Parish Puddle Bill); once when he came down here to stir up the dormant disloyalty in our countrytown. I don't think he succeeded very well in that; we cheered him, as we cheer any other clever performer,—Alfred Wigan or Helen Faucit, Dr. Cumming or Dr. Faustus, the Archbishop of Westminster or the Wizard of the North; but the excitement went out with the footlights. oratory is a kind of intellectual dissipation that does not agree with us in these quiet places; we rise next morning with aching eyes, and parched lips, and resort incontinently to soda-water and Transparently neat and clear as his style

^{*} I think that Mr. Oldbuck is rather hard upon Mr. Burley; but it must be recollected that these letters were written at a time when Mr. Burley was a great power in the State, and when few men who wished well to the Constitution could be got to speak out plainly.

undoubtedly is, I detected no intimation of genius, nor even the temperament of the orator, except in one or two passages of fervid invective. indeed he grew keen, and sharp, and luminous as a Damascus blade. But there was nothing in the whole range of the speaker's powers to stir the heart, or charm the imagination,—no genial and mirth-provoking humour, no large-hearted charity, no haunting pathos. He is a political bigot,pure and zealous it may be, but at the same time cruel and bitter as St. Just. The Frenchman possessed indeed some superb and captivating qualities which the Englishman does not inherit; for dive as deeply as you like into that cold and frigid organization, you will at the last find nothing more than the first sentence he spoke to you disclosed,—intellectual narrowness, and a vulgar ideal.

Mr. Burley's mind is, as I have said, characteristically the mind of the "trader;" and it is disfigured by the two cardinal defects which distort the political opinions of that class,—utter want of respect, especially for the intangible influences which exercise a potent authority over great historical communities, and a consequent misconception of the functions of their Governments. All his speeches betray the characteristic absence of reverence that poverty of imagination begets.

He who feels respect
For any living thing, has faculties
Which he has never used,

is the inversion of the wise sentiment of a great poet, and sagacious politician, which Mr. Burley enforces. He has no association with the Past: he is not touched by the Invisible.

The grievances which a mind, of this narrowly logical and practical calibre, feels most acutely, and the reforms which it naturally selects, will lie, we may be sure, very much on the surface. Society is in peril because a succession-duty is unequally levied: society, on the other hand, is to be saved by electoral districts and the ballot-box. The renewal of the heart is co-incident with the adjustment of the franchise; the awakening of the conscience is to follow the reduction of the incometax. A nation of honest men is a matter of subordinate importance in comparison with a nation of five-pound voters. These clumsy material expedients are the sorry tricks to which a narrow intellect of this kind instinctively resorts. works out the complicated problems in the life of a great and ancient people by "the Rule of Three." Whatever does not fit its formal arithmetic is rejected as unaccountable, and incomprehensible. The true political philosophy looks to the consequences of change: Mr. Burley treats these with contemptuous disregard. "Every citizen is entitled to be an elector; make him an elector, though anarchy and revolution be the fruit." That is the position it assumes,—a position assumed since the world began by twaddling doctrinaires, and political pedants. But, at this time of day, we are surely entitled to expect that our public teachers do not dwell exclusively upon these rudimentary aspects of the debate. To renovate society is the aim of the politician, as well as of the poet, and

the moralist: but the elevation of our social and political life is a problem which arithmetic alone will not settle. "If we raise a people like mere clay, it falls the same," is an aphorism which the history of all revolutions has illustrated; and it is John Milton—not John Burley—who scornfully denies that any form of government can

Of inward slaves make outward free.

That is the philosophy of the great old Liberal: the philosophy of the small modern Liberals is exactly the reverse. "The inward is nothing: the outward is all. 'The something in the world amiss' will be righted by the extension of the suffrage." Believe it not, Jacob. The mænia mundi, the antique taint, cannot be eradicated by this vulgar quackery. John Milton is, after all, a better and safer Radical than John Burley.

I love freedom, Jacob—it is perhaps, after truth, the only thing very much worth fighting for in this world. The old Scottish poet's wistful aspiration—

A! fredome is a noble thing!
Fredome mayss man to haiff liking;
Fredome all solace to man giffis:
He levys at ess that frely levys!
A noble hart may haiff nane ess,
Na ellys nocht that may him pless,
Gyff fredome failyhe; for fre liking
Is yharnyt our all othir thing.
Na he, that ay hass levyt fre,
May nocht knaw weill the propyrte,
The angyr, na the wrechyt dome,
That is cowplyt to foule thyrldome—

has always, considering the time when it was written, appeared to me profoundly touching. And it

is because I love freedom (meaning thereby the right to develop without hindrance or obstruction, but in every righteous way, the faculties my Maker has given me) that I ask you to be very cautious in the experiments you make, that I hesitate to apply the charlatan quackeries which may fatally hurt all that is best and most living in English liberty.

It did not need the publication of Mr. Mill's admirable and most logical argument on Liberty —an argument as mathematically exact as a proposition by Euclid—a fragment, yet, like the torso of the Hercules, a fragment symmetrical and unrivalled—to convince some of us that there is less true liberty among us than is commonly supposed. "What I hold to be the truth, that I will assert to be the truth, in the teeth of the devil, and all his angels." Until a man feels and acts up to that conviction—instinctively resenting and repelling every restraint, by whomsoever imposed, that does not commend itself to his reason and his conscience —he is not a free man, and even the ballot, and universal suffrage, will not make him one. Though he wear the trappings of liberty, he is at heart a slave,—and he will comport himself as a slave, -will fawn and cringe when he is down, will grow fierce, and savage, and cruelly unjust, when he gets the upper hand. Only it is not the devil, and his bad angels, that we have to contend against at present. The nineteenth century has abolished the devil in the meantime. we to fight against a Tudor or Stuart monarch, regarding with resentment, and as an invasion of his

prerogative, the spirit of English liberty; we have to fight against that very liberty grown despotic, against the coercion of the crowd, the tyranny of opinion.

All intolerance—from that of the anointed assassin who butchers his Protestant or Catholic subjects like sheep, down to that which is transacted in the village alehouse or the village church—ought to be hateful to us. Intolerance is almost the only crime between man and man for which there should be no toleration. when we look to the sections into which our public men are divided, do we see any genuine solicitude for freedom? I am willing to become a partyman—Tory, Whig, Radical—if there be any party whose creed contains this article, "Every man must be allowed to believe what he considers true, and to practise it—so long as he does not hurt his neighbour—without molestation. Whoever, therefore, molests him—whoever, be it old woman, parson, or clerk, essays to make society shun or suspect him, to threaten him with its ban, to coerce him into affirming that what he does not believe he does believe, such being the belief of the said clerk, parson, or old woman,—whoever is guilty of this sin against the commonwealth, shall be,"—what? I am afraid we cannot affix any penalty which the magistrate could enforce. We must work, and wait, and not be discouraged. Perhaps when Lord Stanley is Prime Minister we may get an act to I say Lord Stanley, because the temperance, the habitual restraint, the respect for authority, combined with freedom of inquiry, and what

Dr. Arnold would have called the "moral thought-fulness" of his character, offer a sure guarantee that the future Premier will be neither a political nor a social bigot.

But it is only—you say in a tone of indifference -petty manifestations of intolerance, the minute malignities of parties, or cliques, or sects, that hurt us now. We can afford to let these little grievances alone; they will die out in time; society is getting wiser, and better, daily. But I am not sure that it is quite safe to let them alone; they are evil things, and evil things in this bad world have a natural tendency to multiply rather than to diminish; the discomforts they inflict are petty enough, perhaps, when compared with the hangings, and burnings, and drownings, and Bartholomew massacres, and Spanish Furies, of past times; yet, like the toothache, "though not mortal, they are very troublesome." It may be as you say; it may be that this age is at heart gentler, and more tolerant, than any of its predecessors; that the old taint of fierce and ruthless hate no longer infects our hearts. Yet are you sure that you have cast out the devils that tormented you? Are there no disturbing forces in your society which, if let loose, may imperil the symmetry of the edifice you have reared? Why, no one can contemplate, for instance, our "religious revivals," as they are called, without feeling, with a sort of terror, that the embers of persecution smoulder among us. The people who work, and who suffer, these things are the people who passed the Catholic Emancipation Act. How much real

understanding of the doctrines of religious liberty can that Act, then, be said to represent? And if our legislative tolerance rests upon no intelligent regard for liberty, can we vouch for its permanence? Is it not a house built on the sand, which the first high tide may wash away?

In sober earnest, Jacob, do not the scenes that are occurring all over the country suggest certain not altogether pleasant reflections? What potent elements of fanaticism still leaven the character of the people! How the inflammable material, if once lighted again, will blaze! How the pent-up torrent, if it once break through the flimsy barrier, will tear along! Fanaticism is the parent of intolerance; bigotry, of persecution. If that fanatical element in our nature which we fancied we had rooted out, again asserts itself, as appears from many symptoms not altogether improbable, the history of our times may be read by the next generation after a fashion that we little expect. The martyr may again bow down his head in the flames. A civil war between Roundhead and Cavalier, between the bigot and the unbeliever, renewed with even more than the antique bitterness, may again invoke the healing, but iron, hand of a Cromwell.*

^{*} I observe that Mr. Kingsley, in his recent volume of sermons, seems inclined to adopt a similar view.

[&]quot;Or they may answer them—they will be more likely to answer them in England just now, because there are those who will teach them so to answer—in another, but a scarcely less terrible tone. Yes, there is a God; and he is angry with us. And why? Because there is something, or some one, in the nation which he abhors—heretics, papists,'—what not—any man, or class of men, on whom cowardly and terrified ignorance may happen to fix as a scapegoat,

That these possibilities will be immensely increased by the operation of the Reform Bill,* which, in a spirit of impatience and irritation, we are now engaged in passing, few men can doubt. If Mr. Burley were not a member of the Liberal party in the British House of Commons, he would probably be an active functionary of the Spanish Inquisition; and his characteristic intolerance is

and cry, 'These are the guilty! We have allowed these men, indulged them; the accursed thing is among us, therefore the face of the Lord is turned from us. We will serve him truly henceforth—and hate those whom he hates. We will be orthodox henceforth—and prove our orthodoxy by persecuting the heretic.'

"Does this seem to you extravagant, impossible? Remember, my friends, that within the last century Lord George Gordon's riots convulsed London. Can you give me any reason why Lord George Gordon's riots cannot occur again? Believe me, the more you study history, the more you study human nature, the more possible it will seem to you. It is not, I believe, infidelity, but fanaticism, which England has to fear just now. The infidelity of England is one of mere doubt and denial—a scepticism; which is in itself weak and self-destructive. The infidelity of France in 1793 was strong enough, but just because it was no scepticism, but a faith—a positive creed concerning human reason, and the rights of man, which men could formulise, and believe in, and fight for, and persecute for, and, if need was, die for. But no such exists in England now. And what we have most to fear in England under the pressure of some sudden distress, is a superstitious panic, and the wickedness which is certain to accompany that panic—mean and unjust, cruel and abominable things, done in the name of orthodoxy; though meanwhile, whether what the masses and their spiritual demagogues will mean by orthodoxy, will be the same that we and the Church of England mean thereby, is a question which I leave for your most solemn consideration. That, however, rather than any proclamation of the abstract rights of man, or installations of a goddess of reason, is the form which spiritual hunger is most likely to take in England now. there not tokens enough around us now, whereby we may discern the signs of this time?"—Town and Country Sermons, by the Rev. Charles Kingsley, 1861.

* Lord John Russell's Reform Bill of 1860.

characteristic also of the class on whom we propose to confer the franchise. The middle classes of this country, notwithstanding their occasional meanness, vulgarity, and selfishness, are undoubtedly the safest custodiers of our political and religious freedom. These shrewd, cautious, vulgar men, who never go to war for an idea, who have not indeed many ideas to go to war about, who are never touched by fine passion, nor roused to imaginative fervour, are much more likely to make tolerant governors, than men whose feelings are stronger, more acute, and it may be more generous. Do not suppose, pray, that I harbour any of the old Tory dislike to "popular institutions." I don't care a sixpence, in fact, whether an institution be "popular" or the reverse. The sole test of its goodness, as far as I can see, must be that it secures in practice my right—so long as I do not tramp on my neighbour's toes-to speak, and think, and act as I choose. And it is because I am convinced that our present political arrangements preserve about as much of this liberty to me as I can reasonably expect to obtain under any arrangement, that I view with dislike and suspicion a measure which, without offering any adequate compensation, may imperil the moderation of English Government, and hurt the substance of English freedom.

Mr. Oldbuck was a Tory, yet I am sure that like most of his countrymen, democratic or aristocratic, he had a real love of freedom,—

Of freedom in her regal seat Of England,—

and I own that I am not inclined to controvert his conclusions on this matter. I am afraid that fanaticism and sectarianism are not quite dead among us, and that an extension of the franchise is calculated to increase, not to mitigate, their severity.

The spirit of persecution is just the spirit of exclusiveness, under another and more aggressive aspect. The inquisitor is the man who believes that he alone has arrived at the truth, and that his church has obtained a "monopoly" of religion a man, I understand, found in certain other churches besides the Pope's. But this disposition is not confined to the churches; most people have a tendency to become professionally sectarian. We are all apt to get absorbed in, and mastered by, the vocation to which we belong, to make it the one thing needful, to depreciate and underrate the pursuits that are not directly pertinent to its issues. But we can only do this at our peril. Unless we preserve the tone of the system by the cultivation of wide sympathies and general tastes, we must inevitably become fanatical and intolerant,—as practically intolerant as a Calvin, a Loyola, or a Philip. The sectarianism of a religious clique is no doubt the most obnoxious, in so far as religion is, or ought to be, the broadest, deepest, and most embracing in its culture; but the sectarianism of a literary clique, or of a political clique, is quite as detrimental to freedom of conscience, and breadth of intellect. And perhaps at the present day we suffer, upon the whole, less

from spiritual, than from secular sectarianism. To make the inner life of every man and every class freer, more genial, and more sympathetic, is the object of the crusade I am disposed to preach; and if Mr. Bright can shew me that a rating franchise and electoral districts are calculated to promote this end, I am willing to accord him a cordial co-operation. But I entertain grave doubts whether this be the goal to which he tends. To perfect political freedom, he proposes to vest political power in a class whose culture is narrow, whose judgments are arbitrary and fanatical; and the barren uniformity of his arithmetical constitution seems to me scarcely more fatal to the chequered influences which the historic monarchy of England has gradually appropriated, and presently represents, than to the fertile sympathies out of which rational toleration naturally arises.

But it may be said that Mr. Oldbuck exaggerates the extent of the evil, and the need for a remedy. Are not the influences, which at present most affect our society, adverse to the perpetuation of sectarian animosities? Is not the tendency of the railway, of the telegraph, of modern centralization in general, to obliterate these, to bring the nation more together, into closer sympathy and more intimate union? I am by no means satisfied that it is. A system of external connection may be, at heart, a system of exclusion and isolation. Our life is made uniform, monotonous, colourless; but monotony is not assimilation, uniformity is not union, and the woof loses its beauty when the dye is bleached out of it.

Some of us must have travelled from Scotland to the metropolis when the old mail coach was on the road, and may perhaps even yet be able to recall how they felt during those tedious six-and-forty hours. Oppressively tedious they were, no doubt; still you saw the country through which you were passing; the grave cathedral towns, the wide meadow-lands, the quiet hawthorn lanes, the sleeping villages, startled at dawn by the reveillee of the red-coated guard, the ancestral trees and homesteads of the gentry; you heard the different dialects, you watched the changes in the habits and physiognomies of the people, and you arrived in London with an idea, at least, of rural England in your head. None of this remains. Four hundred miles have been blotted out of the itinerary. The traveller falls asleep at Edinburgh; he wakens in London: the middle distance is annihilated. Any two of our towns are as like as two peas, and we have now cut away the country which used to separate them, and which gave to each so far as it could, and as we were concerned,—distinct individuality and character.

All of us feel most at home with certain associates, religious and professional. They speak the same language, they think the same thoughts, they own the same convictions, that we do. When the machinery of social life was rude, disjointed, and inartificial, it was impracticable to keep these companions constantly about us. To live at all, we were obliged to mix and scatter. But now (such is the perfection to which we have brought the new methods) it is not necessary that we

should on any occasion quit our seat, nor mingle, even for a day, in the battle which storms angrily In the engaged compartment of a firstclass carriage, we may pass from end to end of England without speaking to a single living soul.

What we have done here, we have done, and are doing elsewhere. Every man is permitted to become more "self-contained;" his prejudices, his antipathies, his sectarianisms, never being brought into healthy collision with things outside, just because our social arrangements are more skilfully and methodically made. In the perfectly smooth and level world we have originated, there are no angles, nor sharp corners, and human souls slip past each other like the oiled wheels of a machine.

Isolation fosters sectarianism. The nation was at one time forced to rough it, and it then got itself and its opinions well rubbed and jostled. A man with a peculiar tenacity of gripe contrived to hang on, even in those days, to a pet passion or prejudice, but the effect in general was to soften asperities, to warm hearts, to winnow opinions. We fought it out bitterly at the time no doubt; but then we sat down when it was over, shook hands cordially, and loved each other none the worse for the tussle. Our new arrangements enable us to avoid the combat, and evade the combatants if we choose,—and we do choose. When not actually driven into the mélée, we obey the natural instinct (for it is natural to dislike whatever disturbs our complacency and ruffles our vanity), and, like the Levite, intellectually indifferent, morally effeminate—" pass by on the other side." Thus the extension of the material means of social communion, that which we would expect at first sight to work very different results, has been productive of isolation and narrowness. A man is often more alone in the solitude of a crowd than in the solitude of the desert, and a nation may become more sectarian, a clique more cliquish, a profession more professional, when,—nay, because,—all the external impediments to union have been removed.

Mr. Oldbuck's Toryism was literary as well as political. He read Jeremy Taylor in preference to Mr. Spurgeon or "Samuel, Oxon." He did not consider *Festus* quite as great a poem as *Paradise Lost*. He thought a page of Clarendon as pleasant historical reading as a leader in the *Times*. These conservative prejudices are, I suspect, very visible in the last epistle he composed, and which may be entitled, adapting the phraseology of Burke,—

An Appeal from the New to the Old Poets.

THE Christmas week. Let us have an end of politics, till the New Year is fairly in at least. You are a Radical, Jacob, and I am a Tory, but we will shake hands across the gulf—like George and Harry Warrington, the Royalist Cavalier and the Rebel Colonel, in the frontispiece to "The Virginians"—and eat our Christmas capon together once more. Not too often will the mystic rite be repeated. We are "old fogies," both of us, and I scarce like to remember how many years it is now

since you ran away from home, one fine morning, and took to making money, and marrying a wife, and being a rascally Rad—— bah, no politics to-day.

That's a fine lad of yours,—plucky, arrogant, conceited, as all youngsters of his age ought to be, if they are worth the plum-pudding they consume, or the claret they imbibe, during this blessed season. He came down to me on Thursday, his carpet-bag stuffed with "play-buiks and pottery," as my old Scotch retainer, Andrew, called them; but, to do the lad justice, he has hardly ever had his skates off his feet since he arrived, and has left his books pretty much to me. "I do not know that you will admire them, uncle," said the young scamp grinning; "they are great favourites at Oriel, but I don't think the old fogies—beg your pardon, the senior Dons, I mean—care much about them. When you come to understand them, however, nothing can be finer, truer, nobler. There are some of the notablest things in the English language there."

And so he left me looking at the goodly heap, a little dismayed perhaps at the notion of being left alone in company with so much excellence. The classic "old fogies" on my shelves began to look very dingy to me, when compared with the brilliant blues and crimsons in which their successors are attired.

I began, not uncuriously, to peruse these latest products of the English imagination. We wrote *Paradise Lost* a couple of centuries ago; by this time "the heirs of all the ages" should be able to do something very startling indeed. If we

can make our iron-work and our cotton-work so much better than we used to, why should we not turn out a very "superior article" in poetry also?

Well, Jacob, to tell you the plain truth, I never read more wretched rubbish. Not rubbish only, but filthy rubbish,—the language nasty, the ideas nasty. And yet, to judge from the host of editions through which they had passed, and the exuberant "notices of the press" modestly prefixed to each, this nineteenth century poetry must be popular, not with our boys alone. "Mr. B---," said one critic, "has dived into the deepest abysms of our spiritual consciousness, and returned to the surface with a rich argosy of 'barbaric pearl and gold.' Had Shakspeare possessed a greater command over the faculties of his understanding; had his language been more subjective, and his ideas more objective, he would have reminded us in many particulars of Mr. B---." Have we really come to this, Jacob? And shall you and I not lift up our voices in behalf of the genuine homespun poetry, that we used to read when we were boys?

Blastus is the title of the immortal work to which the above criticism is prefixed. It is a dreary and melancholy waste of mud,—something like the Lincoln flats, or the Lagoon at low water. Were it not for its abject feebleness, it would be tolerably profane; but a man who merely drivels, cannot well blaspheme. The Hero and Lucifer talk right off through five hundred and sixty-four mortal pages. This sort of thing must have bored the Devil awfully, one would fancy; once, at least, it would have done so; but the Son of the Morn-

ing, to tell the truth, has grown terribly prosy himself, and twaddles like Dr. Martin Tupper. This is the sort of cheerful view of the universe which the poem is written to enforce:—

Existence I despise,
The shape of man is weariness; a bird's,
A worm's—a whirlwind's—I could change with aught.
Time! dash thine hour-glass down. Have done with this.
The course of Nature seems a course of Death,
And nothingness the sole substantial thing.

"Dash my wig!" said Andrew, unconsciously imitating the poet, as he overheard me declaim the passage, "that slips aff, like ane o' your ain sermons, sir."

After this lava-like eruption, I felt that I required something mild and subdued. So I turned to a poem of the affections. The Angel in the Pantry was evidently the precise antidote I needed. Would you like to hear a few stanzas? Well, listen, if you please.—

By Honor I was kindly task'd

To explain my never coming down
From Cambridge; Mary smiled and ask'd

Were Kant and Goethe yet outgrown?

Jane lived so truly from above,

She look'd so radiantly good

That duty bade me fall in love,

And "but for that," thought I, "I should!"

I worshipp'd Kate with all my will.

In idle moods you seem to see

A noble spirit in a hill,

A human touch about a tree.

Ai Adonis! This prim school-girl sentiment—this placid twaddle—this feeble fun—is exceedingly pretty and decorous, perhaps; but love was a stronger passion with us, when we were boys,—

was it not, Jacob? Do you recollect how glorious John made love? We have had nothing like it for the last one hundred and fifty years, I think.

The song began from Jove,
Who left his blissful seats above—
Such is the power of mighty love!
Sublime on radiant spires he rode
When he to fair Olympia prest,
And while he sought her snowy breast;
Then round her slender waist he curled,
And stamped an image of himself, a sovereign of the world!

But even the vigorous manliness of Dryden could not rise to the pure glow of Spenser's passion.

> Now cease ye damsels! your delights forepast, Enough it is that all the day was yours; Now day is done, and night is nighing fast, Now bring the bride into the bridal bowres; Now night is come, now soon her disarray, And in her bed her lay; Lay her in lilies and in violets, And silken curtains over her display, And odour'd sheets, and arras coverlets. Behold how goodly my fair love does lie In proud humility; Like unto Maia, when as Jove her took In Tempe, lying on the flowrie grass, 'Twixt sleep and wake, after she wearie was With bathing in the Acidalian brook; Now it is night, ye damsels may be gone, And leave my love alone: And leave likewise your former lays to sing; The woods no more shall answer, nor your eccho ring.

We are not a bit purer, morally or intellectually, than our fathers were; but we have grown so shame-faced that we dare not read the *Epithala-mion*.* We are afraid to be true. The sword

* Mr. Palgrave declines to include the Epithalamion among his admirable selections, "as not in harmony with modern manners."

must be in its scabbard. We are dazed by the flash of the cold steel. We drape like Clement, the Christ of Buonarotti. That severe, rare, and lofty, purity, only brings a guilty blush into our cheeks.

I am no critic; but I know a good book by its savour, as I know good wine; and, certainly, the whole of this rubbish is very characteristic of our My old friend Samuel Coleridge used to say that those who had not read fairy-tales in their childhood never obtained "a perception of the unity and wholeness of the universe." poets cannot have read any fairy-tales. Their minds are mangled; broken into shreds and patches; unable to regard any scene or character in its integrity. They are as bad as,—nay, worse than, old JOHN LILY himself. A rubbishy conceit is more invaluable to them than a finished design; in the flood-tide of passion, they stop short to insert some tawdry prettiness, that destroys the whole. 'Tis, I think, the effect of the hot haste we are in —we only see things piecemeal, bit by bit, a scrap of the outside; we cannot wait to penetrate below the husk, and explore the unity of the organisation. And these are the fruits—this absence of perspective, and natural repose, and aërial distance; this murky atmosphere, this utter Babel of thought and

Not in harmony with modern speech, perhaps; but surely the lumen juventæ purpureum is not finally quenched yet? Mr. Palgrave's remark is, if well-founded, rather alarming; and we begin to entertain serious doubts about the prospects of our race. If the rites celebrated in Spenser's great poem are "not in harmony with modern manners," Mr. Darwin must find out a new mode to continue, as well as to originate, the species.

speech; these grotesque and misshapen figures, these gigantic nightmares. To purify such a puddle of muddy ditch-water demands a very vigorous Board of Health, when even the fine irony, and true poetic heat, of *Firmilian*, for the great satirist is always a poet, has not abated the nuisance.

"And this is the poetry of the nineteenth century!" I exclaimed hotly,—" of the century which is ahead of everything and everybody. Well, for my part, I am a Tory in literature as in politics! I have made my choice. What comparison can there be between the limpid stream of the Past, and our impure and discoloured waters? I am content with these fair and stately forms—Shakspeare's luxuriant strength, Spenser's spiritual fire, the tender reserve of Lovelace, the sweet and virginal simplicity of *Comus*, Dryden's strong scorn and massive sense, Pope's subtle mockery and finished grace."

"But, my dear uncle, this is the age of progress."

"No, my dear nephew, it is the age of hurry-skurry. We have all run ourselves out of breath. We have lost the solid and wise serenity of our ancestors,—their antique decorum, and measured propriety. The difference is exactly that between their dances,—composed and deliberate; and yours—boisterous, slightly indecent, perhaps. When I turn to any old English author, I see at a glance that the man wrote his book with perfect deliberation, meditated the structure of every sentence, dispensed with no word that the most fastidious

precision required. That is—'the pure well of English undefiled.' How we have defiled it, everybody knows; there is barely a paragraph written by any of us out of which half-a-dozen words that ought not to be omitted are omitted, scarcely a sentence which does not bear the marks of haste, and rude handling. The result is—confusion, incoherence, slang. We are not quite so rapid as our American cousins yet; but we will overtake them before long, if we keep up the steam as we are doing."

"But Tennyson, uncle?" interposed my rascally nephew, who, knowing my weakness on this subject, skilfully took advantage of it the moment I paused to breathe.

"Tennyson,—yes, Tennyson is a king of men. But he is the last of the giants. He is the last poet among us who is able to conceive and accomplish any really great work,—any consistent design. But even the noblest figure in the *Idylls of the King* is not more noble—does not shew that the sole poet of our generation has risen to the contemplation of any higher type of excellence, than the Sir Lancelot of those vagabond minstrels who lived in the dark ages of the world, when—Providence having neglected to wind it up—it gave up going for a time."

And I took down the *Morte D'Arthur* from its shelf, and read him the last words upon the great knight:—"'Ah! Sir Lancelot,' said Sir Ector, 'thou wert head of all Christian knights.'—'And now, I dare say,' said Sir Bors, 'that Sir Lancelot, there thou liest,—thou wert never matched

of none earthly knight's hands; and thou wert the courtliest knight that ever bare shield; and thou wert the truest friend to thy lover that ever bestrod horse; and thou wert the truest lover of a sinful man that ever loved woman; and thou wert the kindest man that ever stroke with sword; and thou wert the goodliest person that ever came among press of knights; and thou wert the meekest man and the gentlest that ever eat in hall among ladies; and thou wert the sternest knight to thy mortal foe that ever put spear in the rest."

Hymen, O Hymenæe! The marriage bells are ringing in the village, and the Christmas bells chime in merrily. There is much gladness upon the earth to-night. But to how many English hearts does that glad sound make no appeal—to how many English hearts does its assurance of "peace and goodwill" sound like pitiful irony—to how many English hearts does the blessed time speak only of harder privation, and sorer toil, in the grim winter weather! The "heritage of privation and toil,"—is that the only heritage which our Mother England, in the pride of her strength, in the fulness of her years, can bequeath to so many of her children?

MR. JOHN BURLEY explains that it is. He has told the operatives of one of our great towns that it is time to quit the sinking ship,—that there is no longer any hope for them at home. The civis Romanus is to shake the dust off his feet, and, safe among the virgin woods of "the far West," watch the thunder-cloud gather over the fatherland." He may go. But We—we who have



confidence in the stamina of our people, in the bone and sinew of the Saxon race, in the oak-like vigour of this monarchy of a thousand years—we "will not despair of the Republic." Its work is not yet finished. Much remains to be done, and with God's help we will do it; do it so that our children's children shall not be ashamed of the legacy their fathers bequeath them,—"The heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession." And, therefore, hopefully and thankfully we await this Christmas dawn.

Rise happy morn, rise holy morn,
Draw forth the cheerful day from night;
O Father touch the east, and light
The light that shone when Hope was born.

Such were the old gentleman's excessively combustible views about the century to which he had been introduced by mistake. He is probably wiser now. The Opposition, at least, cannot count on him any longer. Abiit ad plures. He has joined the ranks of the most advanced Liberals.

We buried him in the Churchyard, beneath the immemorial yews, among whose branches we used to climb when we were boys, and beneath whose shadows the Rector would moralize on the perishableness of earthly possessions,—nisi invisas cupressus,—during the half hour before dinner, in a very pleasant way. The rustic tombstone bears these words, which I found on his study-table, scrawled on the back of an old envelope, the morning after he died:—

IN MEMORY OF

ABRAHAM OLDBUCK, D.D.,

RECTOR OF SOUTHDOWN AND MUTTONHOLE.

WHO DIED IN 1860,

AGED 80;

AND OF HIS WIFE, EVELYN LAMBE,
WHO DIED IN 1819.
AGED 21.

That makes these odds all even.

Measure for Measure.

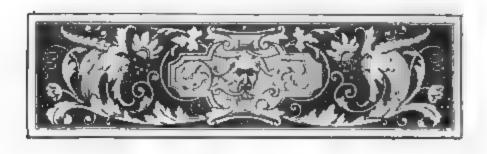
It is an inscription, I believe, that has somewhat scandalised certain of the more rigid dissenters in the neighbouring parish. A parson's tombstone with a line from a play-book for its text! Yet, to those who knew him best, it is not uncharacteristic of the shrewd and pleasant old man, who, spite of the heart-ache, did his work well and manfully here,—waiting patiently to have the sum-total put right hereafter. There is a good deal of rather inextricable arithmetic in "this bad world," and we had best, perhaps, try to practise the same lesson, et permitte Divis cætera.



ERRATA.

Page 22, line 17, for loosing read losing.

- " 25, " 29, for Yarrel read Yarrell.
- ,, 295, ,, 1, for check read cheek.
- ,, 306, ,, 5, for Mr. Shelley read Mrs. Shelley.
- ,, 450, ,, 6, for ex armis read in annia,
- 29 451, 31 8, for manifestoes read manifestoe.
- 30, delete walla,
- ,, 472, ,, 32, for Stuart read Stewart.
- , 491, ,, 21, for Abilt read Abilt.



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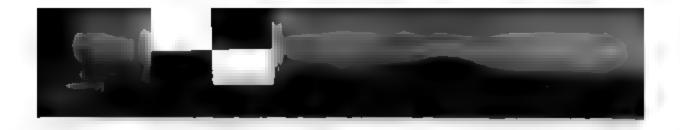
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